



Understanding the ‘Fast-Track’ Transition between Elite Athlete and High-  
Performance Coach in Men’s Association Football and Rugby Union: A  
Grounded Theory

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## **Abstract**

It is commonplace for many high-performance coaches to be former elite athletes in the same sports they coach (Christensen, 2013; Mielke, 2007; Werthner & Trudel, 2009). In many cases, such individuals are ‘fast-tracked’ through formal coach accreditation structures into these high-performance coaching roles (Rynne, 2014). The reasons why former elite athletes dominate coaching roles in professional sports clubs and why a ‘fast-track’ pathway from elite athlete to high-performance coach is supported remain unclear. The project builds upon existing research on coach development to understand the social processes for how high-performance athletes negotiate the career transition into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles in men’s association football and rugby union.

The project employed a Straussian grounded theory methodology which consisted of three iterations of empirical data collection and analysis. The first and second iterations respectively sampled eight senior club directors and 11 academy directors of men’s professional association football and rugby union clubs on why they appointed ‘fast-tracked’ coaches and how they valued particular sources of coaching knowledge. Data were abductively analysed (Blaikie, 2009) and signified Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, capital and hexis in addition to Foucault’s concepts of docile bodies, surveillance and technologies of power. The data suggested that elite athletes were drawn through within their clubs into high-performance coaching roles based on three main themes: a) to ensure the perpetuation of specific playing and coaching philosophies; b) clubs’ former athletes were regarded to act as docile bodies when embodying the clubs’ values in their coaching, and; c) ‘fast-tracked’ appointments were often based upon enhanced levels of symbolic capital and the perceived ability to gain player ‘respect’. Such appointment processes imposed symbolic violence onto other populations for whom competing in male elite sport is inaccessible, most distinctly women.

The final iteration investigated how current or former elite athletes negotiated a ‘fast-tracked’ career trajectory when developing their coaching identities. Current or former elite athletes (n=15) were interviewed on two occasions over a 10-12 month period whilst registered onto their respective national governing body’s level three coach qualification. Both courses were designed only for senior professional athletes to attend. The resulting grounded theory provides an original contribution to the field of coach development by signifying a number of distinct social process for how the athletes negotiated the ‘fast-track’ coaching pathway for developing their coaching identities. The difficulties the coaches encountered in balancing the values imposed on them by their clubs during the process of consolidating their own coaching identities are critically discussed in alignment with Bourdieu and Foucault’s conceptual frameworks.

Recommendations for the provision of formal coach education programmes are made concerning how coaches mediate developing their own coaching philosophies against imposed structural regimes of truth, along with conceptualising the value the coaches attributed to informal mentors over formal mentors. Recommendations are also provided to inform the policies surrounding coach recruitment at the high-performance level in the hope that directors’ recorded subconscious discriminatory practices are addressed.

**Keywords:** coach development; high-performance coach pathways; grounded theory; association football; rugby union; Bourdieu; symbolic violence; Foucault; surveillance; coach talent identification

## Publications resulting from the thesis

### Journal Article

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### Conference Proceedings

Blackett, A.D. (2012). *From elite athlete to elite manager: The impact of fast-tracking for 'on-field' and 'off-field' success*. In: ISSA World Congress of Sociology of Sport 2012, 16.06.12 – 18.06.12, Glasgow Caledonia University.

Blackett, A.D. (2013). *Seeking conceptual clarity in the study of elite professional coaches and managers in rugby union and association football*. In: Centre for Research into Coaching, 22.06.13 - 23.06.13, Crewe, Cheshire.

Blackett, A.D. (2013). *Seeking conceptual clarity in the study of elite professional coaches and managers in rugby union and association football*. In: ICCE Global Coach Conference, 11.09.13 – 13.09.13, Durban, South Africa.

Blackett, A.D. (2015). *A longitudinal study examining elite soccer and rugby union players' transitions into elite coaching*. In: Cluster for Research into Coaching, 9.09.15 – 10.09.15, Crewe, Cheshire.

Blackett, A.D., Evans, A., & Piggott, D. (2015). *Elite athlete to high-performance coach in men's rugby union and soccer: A cohort longitudinal study*. In: International Centre of Coaching Excellence Conference, 22.08.15 – 25.08.15, Vierumaki, Finland.

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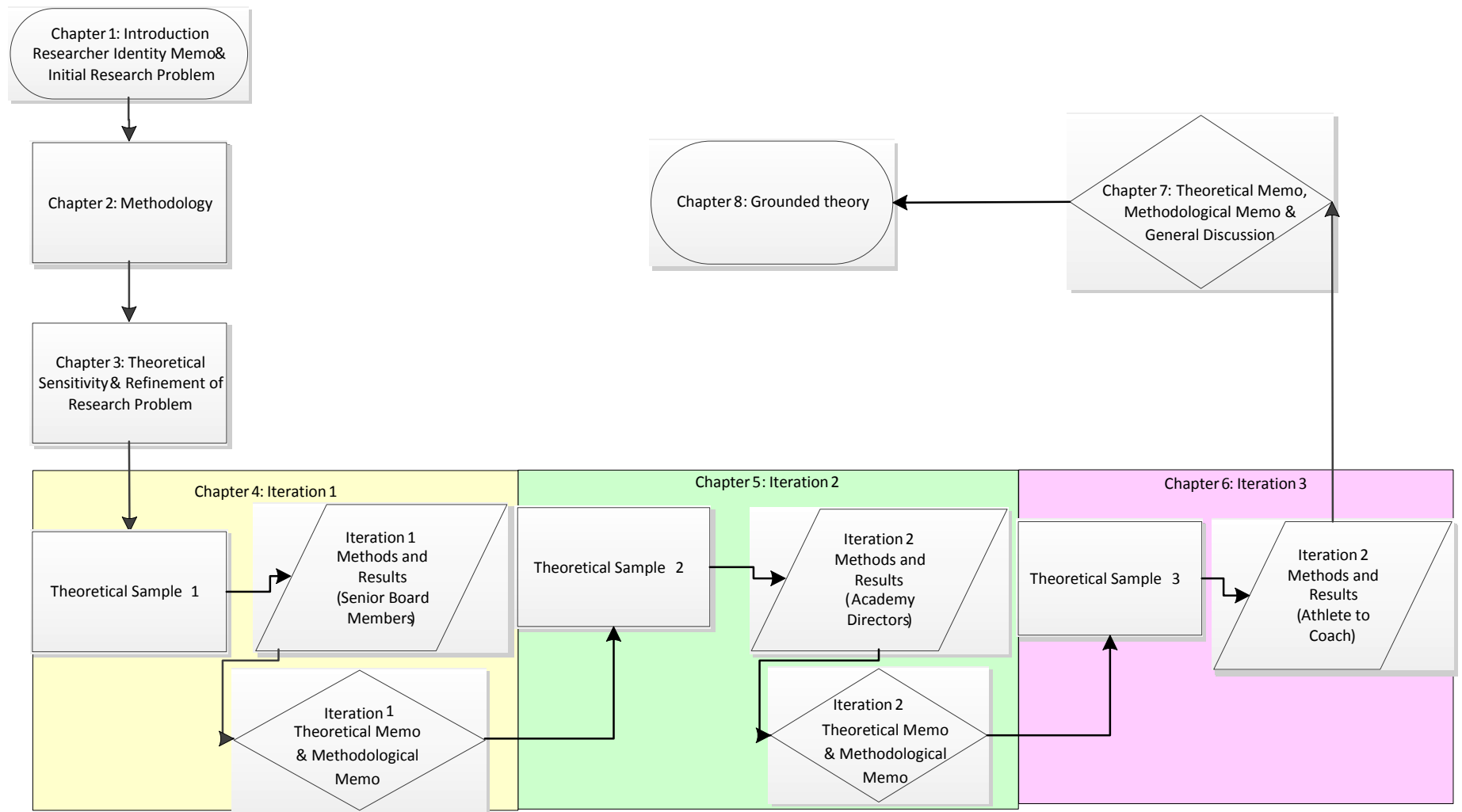
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## Thesis structure

**Chapter one** outlines the project's initial overarching research problem of wanting to understand the social processes for how high-performance athletes negotiate the 'fast-track' career transition into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles in men's association football and rugby union. Justification for the value of the research is made here through explicating my own underpinning *a priori* assumptions towards the research area by connecting this to my life history via a 'researcher identity memo'. This leads onto **chapter two**, which itself rationalises the project's decision to employ a Straussian grounded theory methodology (GTM). Straussian GTM emphasises research to conduct a theoretical sensitivity phase which replaces the orthodox literature review. Thus, **chapter three** is the project's theoretical sensitivity phase. It takes the form of an overview of literature in the field of coach development and learning along with the social theories which extant literature on coach development and learning has drawn upon. Chapter three concludes by finalising the research problem and in doing so develops sub-research questions for initial empirical investigation.

As is illustrated overleaf in figure one, the thesis consists of three empirical studies which comprise as separate iterations. Each iteration begins with a theoretical sample chapter that justifies the populations which have been sampled along with each iteration's study design and methods. A theoretical memo chapter explains the emergence of theory follows the reporting of each iteration's results and conclusion. At the end of each iteration is also a methodological memo chapter. These chapters explain to the reader how a truly iterative approach has been employed as opposed to a pre-determined design. The project's penultimate chapter is **chapter seven** and takes the form of a final theoretical memo and general discussion, as it analyses all of the previous data sets which underpin the development of a grounded theory (GT). **Chapter eight** is the thesis' conclusion. It outlines the GT and the original contribution of knowledge the thesis makes to the field of high-performance coach pathways, learning and development.



**Figure 1 Illustration of thesis structure**

## Preface

A key feature of this project has been the issue of emergence: emergence of the research problem and then of theory. Through the implementation of a GTM<sup>1</sup>, the research problem of wanting to investigate the transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach initially emerged as a result of my own personal history and interest in the sociology of coach education. The GT which has ultimately emerged is a result of the relational enterprise between myself as researcher, the data and the theory. The thesis commences by introducing how the initial research problem emerged and was later refined (as is shown in table one). The introduction then continues to detail the process in which a more specified research problem was then developed, which in turn led onto the construction of specific sub-research questions that directed empirical analysis.

**Table 1 Development of research problem**

| Phase of development | Research problem  |
|----------------------|---|
| 1.                   | To understand the ‘fast-track’ transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach  |
| 2.                   | To understand the social processes for the ‘fast-track’ transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach   |
| 3.                   | To understand the social processes for the ‘fast-track’ transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach in men’s association football and rugby union |

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<sup>1</sup> Within the thesis, the term grounded theory methodology (GTM) has been applied to note the project’s overarching methodology. The term grounded theory (GT) has then later been applied to signify the results of the methodology (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007).

# Chapter 1 - Introduction

Choosing a research problem through the professional or personal experience route may seem more hazardous than the suggested or literature routes. This is not necessarily true. The touchstone of a potential researcher's experiences may be a more valuable indicator of a potentially successful research endeavour than another, more abstract source (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p.33-34).

Sport has played a central role in my life story. My own personal development has been entwined with my athletic development, as both my sporting and personal growth has been shaped by many inspiring and generous coaches whose lasting impact I can only imagine is largely unbeknown to them. The same sentiments can also be said for those coaches who, for what I consider, have had adverse effects on my sporting and personal development. Combined, my experiences as both an athlete and coach lay the foundations for my desire to pursue a research career on the subject of the sociology of coach education and development.

Both my athletic and coaching experiences have not only influenced the research problem which is at the heart of the thesis' topic, but also my own *a priori* assumptions towards research and the phenomenon under analysis. To explain how and why the project's initial research problem and line of inquiry emerged - of wanting to *understand the transition of elite athletes entering into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles* - the following section of the introduction aims to place the thesis into context by outlining my own personal background and *a priori* assumptions towards the research problem. This is completed through a 'researcher identity memo' (Maxwell, 2012) which aims to increase transparency on my own subconscious assumptions from the outset, while also justifying the project's research aims by reference to my personal history.

## 1.1 Researcher identity memo: Acknowledging authorial presence

Finlay (2002a, 2002b) and Maxwell (2012, 2013) have written extensively on the practicalities and considerations for qualitative researchers to be reflexive on their own assumptions prior to conducting research. In particular, Maxwell (2012, p.98) stated ‘the grain of truth in the traditional view is that your personal (and often unexamined) motives as researcher have important consequences for the validity of your conclusions’. The consequences which Maxwell (2012) refers to are taken to mean how the conclusions drawn by qualitative research can be co-constituted as a result of the relational enterprise between the researcher and the researched. This is an important point concerning the epistemological stance in which I have shaped the thesis’ line of enquiry and is one which I am eager to make clear from the outset: that the researcher cannot be entirely divorced from the research in what has been traditionally considered as objective research (Maxwell, 2012).<sup>2</sup>

As will be outlined in more detail within the methodology chapter (chapter two), the project has employed a GTM<sup>3</sup> which promotes an ‘intimate and enduring relationship between researcher and site’ (Suddaby, 2006, p.640). This view also aligns to the tenets of interpretivist research in respect that qualitative researchers in the social sciences undertake the function of research instrument and *interpret* data throughout the analytical process (Finlay & Gough, 2003). This means the researcher’s own characteristics, personality and experiences should therein be explicated in order to evoke the reader’s understanding on the *a priori* beliefs which have underpinned and informed the project (Finlay, 2002a, 2002b; Maxwell, 2012, 2013). Thereby this section follows the structure of Maxwell’s (2012) ‘researcher identity memo’ by consciously addressing a total of six questions (table two) prior to engagement in any empirical research. The four initial questions in table two provoke a pre-reflexive process on the researcher’s own subjective perceptions. The following two

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<sup>2</sup> Further clarification and justification on the thesis’ paradigm of inquiry is made in section 3.1.3.

<sup>3</sup> A detailed explanation for the adoption of a Straussian GTM is also provided within chapter two.

questions synthesise the reflection as a whole and facilitate towards producing an action plan for designing the research project.

**Table 2 Researcher identity memo questions (adapted from Maxwell, 2013, p.34-35).**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| First phase reflective questions           | 1a. What prior experiences have you had that are relevant to your topic of study?  |
|  | 1b. What beliefs and assumptions about your topic or setting have resulted from these experiences?   |
|  | 1c. What goals have emerged from these, or have otherwise become important for your research?  |
|  | 1d. How have these experiences, assumptions, and goals shaped your decision to choose this topic, and the way that you are approaching this project? |
| Second phase action plan setting questions | 2a. What potential advantages do you think the goals, beliefs, and experiences that you describe have for your study?                                |
|  | 2b. What potential disadvantages do you think these may create for you, and how might you deal with these?   |

For brevity, the first four reflexive questions are addressed collectively. A summative position is then provided by addressing the final two action plan setting questions individually. This leads onto an overview of literature on coach pathways, coach learning and the associated social theories which the literature has drawn upon to conceptualise coach development (chapter three).

To enhance critical reflexive engagement, the following section is also presented through a reflexive ‘confessional tale’ that is delivered by writing in the first person (Sparkes, 2002). The move away from the hegemonic stance of writing in the third person is intended to depict and situate at the foreground of the project my own subjective preconceptions as a researcher on the thesis’ research problem (Sparkes, 2002). The



intention here is not to eliminate subjective bias. Instead, being introspective at this point of the thesis recognises ‘the impact of position, perspective, and presence of the researcher’ (Finlay, 2002a, p.532). Hence, it is judged that a pre-reflexive account in the form of Sparkes’ (2002) ‘confessional tale’ by utilising the framework of Maxwell’s (2012) ‘researcher identity memo’ can enhance rigour and trustworthiness of the thesis by making my own *a priori* experiences, views and values towards the phenomena under investigation transparent (Hertz, 1997; Jootun, McGhee & Marland, 2009; Tracy, 2010).

## **1.2 A confessional tale: The foundations of the project**

I first embarked on a coaching career whilst I was an amateur association football (AF) player in New Zealand. At this time, I was an amateur coach of a children’s regional AF team. I had started to become increasingly aware of the pedagogical and practical components of coaching. Consequently, I had become progressively more critical of my own coaches’ coaching abilities, or what I perceived to be, for some, a lack of ability. This seemed especially true for the coaches who were former elite athletes. One particular example during my time in New Zealand remains at the forefront of my memory. The AF club which I represented had appointed a recently retired ex-professional footballer as head coach. The coach had a lengthy professional career playing for a number of English and overseas teams and had also competed at an international level. He took great pride in frequently reminding us of his athletic achievements during training sessions and matches. His training sessions were primarily repetitive sprint exercises or full 11-a-side training matches accompanied with lots of derogatory verbal snipes towards me and the rest of the team. His experiences of playing as a professional and international athlete meant that his expectations for us as amateur athletes were set extremely high. Thus, when I failed to meet these technical and

tactical standards, his intolerance towards me left me feeling inept and bereft of confidence. His engagement with me on a man-management front compounded these feelings. For instance, on one occasion, my dissatisfaction with the monotony of his training sessions came to light as I queried the value of performing sprinting drills week in week out. I received the terse response of: “Because that’s what we did when I played for (English Championship club). If you’re not happy with it then you can go to (rival club)”. By beginning to internally question his methods and overall coaching practice, I subsequently began to question his credibility and legitimacy as a coach, which in my view affected my enjoyment of competing and ultimately affected my athletic performances.

Upon my return to England I attempted to continue with my football career, yet I encountered many similar issues of former athletes who were beginning their coaching careers at an amateur level. These negative events duly contributed to the breakdown of many athlete-coach relationships (Jowett & Carpenter, 2015; Toner, Nelson, Potrac, Gilbourne & Marshall, 2012) and which culminated in my own desire to discontinue playing AF either competitively or recreationally. Moreover, when I returned back to England from New Zealand I began work as a community coach for a professional AF club’s community department. One of my roles was to coach a Saturday morning group of under 10 to 12 year olds recreationally with the mandate to notify the academy coaches of any prospective athletes who exhibited potential talent for the club’s youth academy to recruit. On one occasion, my session was observed by a former athlete who had played professionally for the same club and who had now attained an academy coaching role. I was delivering a coaching session designed on the Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) model (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982; Kirk & MacPhail, 2002; Stolz & Pill, 2016) which I had just been introduced to as part of my undergraduate studies of sports coaching and development.<sup>4</sup> My session was interrupted by the former player who remarked that my coaching session

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<sup>4</sup> A further definition of TGfU is located in section 6.4.8.

“looked messy and unorganised” by account that I had arranged multiple small-sided games simultaneously. His recommendation was that I should revert to linear drills to “better control the players” whilst inferring that this was the ‘correct’ way and evidently his ‘preferred’ way to coach. I interpreted such a belief to have been founded from his own experiences as a professional athlete (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003) which had provided him with the belief of rejecting alternative approaches for coaching practices and therefore reproduce the traditional coaching ideology of linear drills (Cushion, Ford & Williams, 2012; Gilbert & Trudel, 2005; Mallett, Trudel, Lyle & Rynne, 2009). Therefore, akin to my experiences as a player, such events furthermore provoked my interest for researching the elite-athlete to coach pathway.

Alongside these coaching roles I had decided to further my coaching career by enrolling onto an undergraduate degree of a BA (Hons) in Coaching and Sport Development. It was during this time where the foundations of the current thesis were deliberated upon as I became sensitised to the academic literature on coaching practices, coach education and coach development. As a practicing coach, I was always fascinated with how the literature interpreted the role of a coach and how scholarly work had begun to conceptualise the processes on how coaches acquired knowledge for their ‘craft’ (Woodman, 1993). At that particular time, I read the material through the eyes of a coach, whilst I also interpreted the content by reflecting on my own experiences as an athlete.

Running in parallel with my academic studies, I also had an increasing awareness of the media discourse surrounding the appointments of high-performance coaches who had recently retired as elite athletes across a range of sports. I had become increasingly cognisant of what I perceived to be a change of media reporting within the United Kingdom (UK) on the basis for which each of these high-performance coaching and managerial appointments were made. Within the media coverage for such appointments, the term ‘fast-tracked’ was frequently coined. Indeed, this is a term which has since received specific focus from

literature when investigating ‘fast-tracked’ and ‘traditional’ coach pathways (Rynne, 2014).

In this sense, ‘fast-track’ is taken to mean:

The special concessions offered to former elite athletes so that their progress through formal coach accreditation structures is expedited. For example, former elite athletes may not be required to undertake entry-level qualifications and may be granted access to fast track courses that are often shortened (sometimes less rigorous) versions of accreditation courses (Rynne, 2014, p.300).

From my perspective, what seemed to have been a previously accepted phenomenon<sup>5</sup> had begun to receive increased media debate and scrutiny on the potential merits and shortcomings of former elite athletes’ ‘fast-tracked’ career trajectories into high-performance coaching roles in a number of sports. Of particular note was the announcement of Martin Johnson’s appointment as the manager of England men’s national rugby union (RU) team in April, 2008 (BBC, 2008) after he had retired from a highly successful career as England’s men’s RU captain and Leicester Tiger’s captain. Johnson’s appointment was made despite journalists and commentators reporting him to have possessed a significant lack of elite coaching or management experience. Conversely, however, other journalists and commentators did not regard Johnson’s lack of coaching experience as an issue. Hewett’s (2008, p.56) and Healey’s (2008, p.64) below comments are two examples within the written UK media which respectively depicted the contrasting views towards Johnson’s appointment:

Johnson has no relevant managerial experience – his anonymous wanderings in the lower reaches of the banking industry a decade-and-a-half ago do not add up to a fat lot when it comes to running an international rugby side – yet he has been handed a significant amount of power by a union desperate to boost their competitive and commercial standing with some tangible success in major championships (Hewett, 2008, p.56).

But I’m happy to correct the notion that because Martin Johnson has no coaching

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<sup>5</sup> Scholarly work (Carter, 2006; Mielke, 2007; Werthner & Trudel, 2009) has also considered athletes’ fast-tracked pathway to have been a culturally accepted phenomena within elite sport. An overview of the literature supporting this view is situated in section 3.1.1.

experience he should not be considered for a managerial role. The guy has got a very sharp brain and is good at working out how to facilitate things. We saw that when he was captain. Sir Clive Woodward took a lot of plaudits for the World Cup win in 2003 but much of England's success was down to Johnno<sup>6</sup> pulling Clive in at certain crucial times... And now, four years on, I actually think Johnno's lack of coaching experience is a bonus. He has a fresh outlook, uncluttered by textbook thinking (Healey, 2008, p.64).

The encircling debate concerning Johnson's suitability and credibility brought to my mind many parallels of my own experiences of having former elite athletes coach me in New Zealand and England. Indeed, I had encountered numerous elite athletes retiring from athletic competition who began their coaching journey via what I perceived to be a 'fast-tracked' trajectory whilst coaching me in a number of English professional AF club academies as a junior and whilst I had played in both New Zealand and in England as an adult. I must concede, however, that a number of these figures were inspiring coaches who I enjoyed and prospered playing for. Nonetheless, the experiences of playing for coaches with an elite athletic background were ones which I primarily regarded as negatives, and which I consider as ultimately having had a detrimental effect on my own playing career.

Therefore, on the basis of these personal experiences and events reported within the media, the project's initial aim was:

- *To understand the 'fast-track' transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach.*

The completion of the first phase of Maxwell's (2012, 2013) 'researcher identity memo' enabled me to contextualise the potential advantages and disadvantages these experiences had left me with towards the research area. These are now succinctly addressed by considering Maxwell's (2013) second phase action plan setting questions (table two).

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<sup>6</sup> Martin Johnson was regularly referred to as 'Johnno' by his team-mates and within the UK's media.

### 1.2.1 Researcher positionality

*What potential advantages do you think the goals, beliefs, and experiences that you describe have for your study?*

The underlying assumptions and beliefs engendered from my own playing experiences had negatively framed my view on the elite athlete to coach pathway. Yet I had also encountered individuals who had negotiated this career transition successfully, as not all of my experiences were negative, both as an athlete and coach. Indeed, upon conducting this reflexive process, it became clear in my own mind that I too had undertaken this particular pathway to a lesser extent. As a footballer in New Zealand, I was recruited to coach a regional representative youth AF team for what I perceived to be primarily based on my athletic capabilities as I had not undertaken any direct coaching roles prior to this.

Being reflexive on both of these positive and negative aspects of the phenomena was, in my view, an advantage because I had become somewhat sensitised to both perspectives of viewing the pathway of athlete to coach as a negative but also as a positive and emancipatory phenomenon. Furthermore, after I had previously practiced as an AF coach and athlete, at the commencement of the project I was no longer involved in any of these capacities within AF or any other sport. I also interpreted this as an advantage as it meant I could conduct the research process from the perspective of an outsider 'looking in'. Hellawell (2006, p.485) defines outsider researcher as when the 'researcher is not *a priori* familiar with the setting and people s/he is researching'.

Researchers who are positioned as outsiders have been thought of as being able to 'encourage thorough and rigorous analysis by enabling the researcher to maintain a critical distance from the data' (Tinker & Armstrong, 2008, p.53). In contrast, an insider position has been defined as 'an individual who possesses *a priori* intimate knowledge of the community and its members' (Hellawell, 2006, p.484). I did not view my own position as a complete outsider however, as I had some *a priori* familiarity with the setting and people I

was intending to research. Consequently, I viewed my position as a ‘semi-outsider’ and saw this as a benefit by virtue that I was somewhat sensitised to some of the issues which pertained to the people and setting in which the phenomena was occurring, whilst I also had the ability to maintain a critical distance from not being part of that specific setting anymore.

By using Maxwell’s (2013) final action plan question within his reflexive ‘identity memo’, the next section discusses some of the methodological actions I implemented in order to attend to these points of researcher positionality.

### **1.2.2 Actions for researcher positionality: Abductive research strategy rationale**

*What potential disadvantages do you think these may create for you, and how might you deal with these?*

All of the above reflections brought to prominence the significance of my own subjective assumptions which I attributed to the transition of elite athletes becoming high-performance coaches in a post-athletic career, even before commencing with any empirical investigation. At the start of the project, I had become increasingly aware of my own self and position as a researcher (Finlay, 2002a; Finlay & Gough, 2003; Maxwell, 2012, 2013). It was accepted from the outset that as the researcher I could not be completely detached from the research, nor was I a ‘blank-slate’ (*tabula rasa*) who was ‘empty headed’, bereft of any prior knowledge and experiences (Suddaby, 2006). Indeed, in prospectively looking forward, I also upheld the view that I would not undertake the project in an epistemological vacuum in which I did not have any direct influence in the research process (Maxwell, 2012, 2013). In such a view, I recognised that these experiences and perceptions could influence the project’s direction of data collection and data analysis procedures (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Consequently, some scholars (Maxwell, 2012, 2013; Milner, 2007) have advocated that researchers should consider their own positionality. Indeed, Corbin and Strauss' (2015, p.27) view was that as researchers 'we don't separate who we are as persons from the research and analysis that we do. Therefore, we must be self-reflexive about how we influence the research process and, in turn, how it influences us'. It is for this reason why the thesis has commenced with the 'researcher identity memo' in order to acknowledge my own position within the research and how this influences the research process and its results. Moreover, I have also continued to write in the first person throughout the remainder of the thesis in order to expose my voice and the reflexive processes I undertook during the research process when interpreting the participants' voices in constructing a GT. I have also presented within the thesis theoretical, operational and methodological memos to signpost moments of my own reflexivity during data analysis to demonstrate how the project developed.<sup>7</sup>

The issue of researcher positionality has not been greatly considered within research on sports coaching apart from some narrative (McDonald, 2016; McMahon, 2013; McMahon & Zehntner, 2014) and autoethnographical analyses (Jones, 2006; Mills, 2015; Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne & Nelson, 2012; Zehntner & McMahon, 2014). In these studies the researchers analysed their own experiences as sports coaches to highlight the contested social and cultural influences that affected their coaching practices and individual identities. External to sport, however, researcher positionality has been considered furthermore by scholars who have analysed feminism (England, 1994), the operating and management of educational organisations (Hellowell, 2006), nursing (Rolfe, 2006), along with race and cultural studies (Milner, 2007). These studies have emphasised the promotion of researchers employing reflexive practices, not only at the beginning of the research process, but *during* the entirety of the research process in order to 'analyse how subjective and intersubjective

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<sup>7</sup> The application of utilising theoretical and operational memos in line with a GTM is discussed in the thesis' methodology chapter (chapter two).



elements' affect research (Finlay, 2002a, p.531).

It is at this point that I considered conducting inductive research to be pragmatically and logically impossible. At the same time, I acknowledged that employing totally deductive research would potentially constrain the project's analysis and conclusions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Consequently, I regarded an abductive research strategy as a viable 'middle-ground'; a position situated between inductive and deductive research (Reichert, 2010). Blaikie (2009, p.156) defines abductive research as:

...data and theoretical ideas are played off against one and another in a developmental and creative process... *research becomes a dialogue between data and theory mediated by the researcher*. Data are interpreted and reinterpreted in the light of an emerging theory, and, as a result, change in the process. (original emphasis)

An abductive research strategy enables initial data to be collected and analysed deductively, but as new data are collected during the research process, either within the same iterations or following iterations<sup>8</sup>, then analysis of this data can be theoretically compared against one and another. In other words, during the early stages of data collection and analysis, conclusive claims are avoided until the new data are collected and analysed through an iterative process (Reichert, 2010). As Blaikie's (2009) above statement denotes, through the iterative process theories can be drawn upon to conceptualise the emergent data categories. Whilst these initial theories can be productive in conceptualising the data, when the research progresses, an abductive research strategy requires an 'openness' for the possibility of alternative theories to emerge and to better conceptualise the data on a macro-scale (Reichert, 2014).

As is explained in more detail within the forthcoming methodology chapter (chapter

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<sup>8</sup> I provide a description as to the meaning of 'iteration' and how the thesis has applied it within a GTM in chapter two, specifically in section 2.7.1.

two), and in particular within section 2.7 entitled '*operationalising grounded theory*', the variant of GTM devised by Strauss and Corbin<sup>9</sup> (1998; Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 2015) accommodated an abductive research strategy over the other variants proffered by Glaser (1978) and Charmaz (2006, 2014). The Straussian version of GTM includes axial coding which I have interpreted as a form of abductive analysis (Birks & Mills, 2011; Reichertz, 2010). This was in the view that axial coding allowed me to 'reassemble data that were fractured during open coding' to then conceptualise how 'categories crosscut and link' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.124) with each other as well as with existing theories (Hallberg, 2006). Effectively, a Straussian GTM accommodated the consideration of existing theories and concepts to conceptualise the phenomenon in accordance with the emerging data to a greater degree than Glaser's GTM.

To summarise this reflexive process, when proposing actions to overcome the potential disadvantages for my own *a priori* assumptions on the phenomena under investigation, whilst employing an abductive and reflexive research strategy, GTM was regarded as a viable and cohesive methodology of *choice* (Piggott, 2010; Reichertz, 2010). In response to the project deploying a GTM, it is important to introduce what GTM actually is and how it has been used in this instance. The thesis does this by extending the reflexive tone for rationalising the variant of GTM promoted by Strauss and Corbin, which, in turn, leads onto specifically defining the research problem furthermore.

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<sup>9</sup> Hereinafter referred to as 'Straussian' GTM.

## **Chapter 2 - Grounded theory methodology**

This chapter is structured in a way which first justifies the rationale for why GTM was chosen as the project's methodology. It then progresses to define what GTM is through engagement with the literature that has reported the differences between the multiple versions of GTM which have arisen since its conception. At this point, the decision to employ a Straussian GTM over the alternative version is discussed. The chapter then culminates by detailing how a GTM was implemented throughout the entirety of the research process by evaluating the recent discussion scholars have made in the disciplines of sport when contributing to the development of GTM.

### **2.1 Why grounded theory methodology?**

It has been proposed that GTM has become 'the most widely used qualitative interpretive framework in the social sciences' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.508). There are a number of distinctive principles which distinguish GTM from alternative methodologies which make it appealing for researchers to employ. In particular, one of GTM's most unique elements centres upon the simultaneous process of data collection and analysis which is conducted in concert with reference back to the literature and other data sources (Goulding, 1998; Holt & Tamminen, 2010; Hutchinson, Johnston & Breckon, 2010, 2011; Payne, 2007; Weed, 2009). GTM culminates in the generation of a GT by revealing basic social processes via producing analytical memos, codes and concepts that are intended to deter researchers from forcing the data to fit a theory, but instead, strive to have a theory which the data accurately represents (Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The conception of GTM came in 1965, whereby Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss first authored '*Awareness of dying*'. Glaser and Strauss (1967) then authored the seminal GTM textbook '*The discovery of grounded theory*'. The authors espoused GTM to be a systematic methodology that contested the hegemonic positivist paradigm the social sciences were mostly conducted within at the time (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999; Lincoln, 2010). Glaser and Strauss found positivist studies of that era which employed qualitative research designs to be 'impressionistic, anecdotal, unsystematic and biased' (Charmaz, 2006, p.5). This was because a founding assumption of Glaser and Strauss was that social sciences and natural sciences did not 'address the same subject matter' (Suddaby, 2006, p.633). Although these assumptions heavily drove the creation of GTM, they were not explicitly attended to in the publication of their seminal text with any robust ontological or epistemological basis (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Weed, 2009).

GTM has been considered to have significantly evolved since its initial conception (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Dunne, 2011; Eaves, 2001; Hutchinson et al., 2010; Oliver, 2012; Piggott, 2010; Weed, 2009). Indeed, Dey (1999, p.2) has claimed that there are 'probably as many versions of grounded theory as there were grounded theorists'. Additional critics of GTM, like Thomas and James (2006), have focussed upon how Glaser and Strauss (1967/1999) advocated an inductive strategy where theories were *discovered* within the data, emerging after data analysis was completed through an analytical interplay that referred back and forth between the data and literature (constant comparison method), instead of approaching research with a deductive logic.<sup>10</sup>

What is important to note is that the employment of GTM is a choice the researcher makes based on the meta-theoretical stances the researcher upholds (Crotty, 1998; Piggott,

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<sup>10</sup> The debate concerning the initial inductive nature of GTM and its progression in moving away from this is reviewed in forthcoming sections of the general methodology chapter (sections 2.2-2.4).

2008, 2010; Reichertz, 2010). As has been explained in chapter one, in the very formative stages of the project's conception, I had already been sensitised to the literature in the field of coach development, education and learning. Therefore, as will be explained in the forthcoming theoretical sensitivity chapter (chapter three), during this engagement with the literature I had identified that there was very little empirical research which had developed a substantive or middle-ranging theory<sup>11</sup> which explained the social processes of elite athletes' transitions into high-performance coaching roles. On this basis, GTM is considered an appropriate methodology to employ when very little is known about the topic (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Moreover, GTM was an appealing choice for me, as it was not a methodology which upheld a deductive logic and relied on existing theories to test (Urquhart, 2013). Instead, when applying a GTM, Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.144) avowed how researchers could act like detectives in the sense that 'he or she follows the leads of the concepts, never quite certain where they will lead, but always open to what might be uncovered'. In so doing, the objective of GTM is to systematically uncover the underlying interactions between agency and structure and to 'develop theories that address the interpretive realities of actors in social settings' (Suddaby, 2006, p.634) with whom the phenomena under analysis are directly associated (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999).

Importantly, the research question or problem should determine the methodology (Bryant, 2012) and that researchers should not simply employ GTM as an orthodox or 'go to' methodology (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen & Karlsson, 2002). In the case of the current project, the manner in which the research problem was constructed at the beginning - *'to understand the 'fast-track' transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach'* - was broad in scope because of the limited analysis that literature had paid to this

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<sup>11</sup> The GT notion of substantive and middle-range theory is defined in the forthcoming section 2.2.

subject, yet it was still framed in a manner whereby both structure and process could be studied:

If one studies structure only, then one learns why but not how certain events occur. If one studies process only, then one understands how persons act/interact but not why. One must study both structure and process to capture the dynamic and evolving nature of events (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.127).

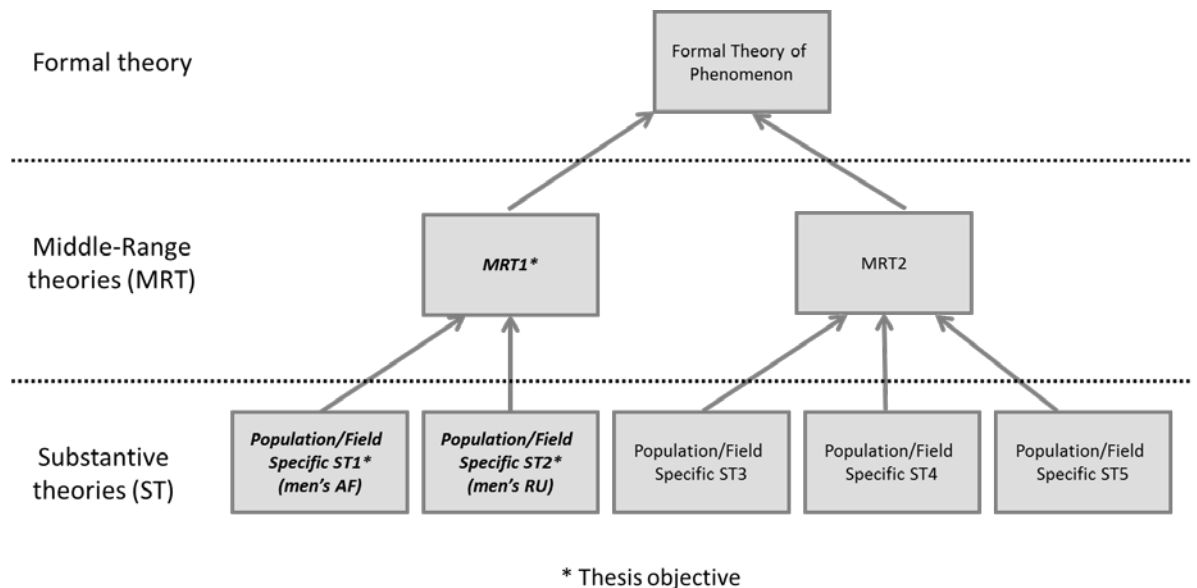
Indeed, scholars who have focussed on sports coach development and learning have proposed similar recommendations for researchers to consider. In particular Barker-Ruchti, Barker, Rynne and Lee (2016, p.6) have proposed two foci: 1) 'how do individuals become high-performance coaches?' and; 2) 'how does cultural context influence learning, and how can coaches and athletes exert influence on their contexts to increase intentional learning?' Aligning to these recommendations therefore meant the application of a GTM was felt to be conducive and of benefit for the present project.

Moreover, Corbin and Strauss' (2008) analogy of the researcher acting like a detective made GTM ever more appealing. This was in the sense that although a Straussian variant of GTM had structure, which would guide the project and me as a researcher, it still accommodated some flexibility on a pragmatic front where emerging lines of enquiry could be followed in an abductive logic (Reichert, 2010). Most notably, a Straussian GTM was considered to enable an analytical interplay with the data and my own conceptual lens whilst attaining a deeper understanding of the phenomena other than just cause and effect (Corbin & Strauss, 1988; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A Straussian GTM was therefore considered to afford the research to expose the dualism of agents' lived experiences and the influences of social structures specific to the phenomena under investigation.

## **2.2 The outcome of grounded theory methodology: A grounded theory**

The result of implementing a GTM is a GT which can come in three forms: substantive, middle-range and formal (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Substantive theories offer theoretical relevance in relating to the ‘extent to which it deals with the real concerns of those involved in the processes to which it applies’ (Weed, 2009, p.506). Substantive theories are specific to a particular population. Middle-range theories were initially proposed by Merton (1968) and are developed by extending and abstracting concepts from substantive theories (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). At a macro scale of analysis, the abstraction of middle-range theories are used as a platform to study ‘phenomena under a variety of conditions’ (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p.23) across different domains which then enables formal theory to be developed (Suddaby, 2006; Weed, 2009 - see figure two overleaf). The present project intended to achieve both a substantive theory and a middle-range theory. This is because the project has analysed the research problem across the two contexts of AF and RU, of which, justification of these two selected contexts is provided in section 3.3. Therefore, the substantive theory presents the individual differences between the two contexts. Overarching themes have then been aggregated from the substantive theory to produce a middle-range theory (chapter eight).

As has already been noted, since the original GTM was devised by Glaser and Strauss (1967/1999), there have been a number of interpretations of GTM. Therefore, the remainder of this methodology chapter provides an outline on the variants of GTM and the reasons for the creation of alternative forms.



**Figure 2 Relationship between GT's three forms of theories and the thesis' objective**

### 2.3 Glaser and Strauss' original grounded theory methodology

Having emerged from the schools of nursing within North America, Glaser and Strauss' (1965, 1967/1999) conception of GTM came at a time when the dominant paradigm of positivism had begun to be revised by social scientists (Hammersley, 1989). Glaser and Strauss (1967/1999) recognised that during the overall research process social relationships between the researcher and the researched were created. Their experiences dealing with terminally ill patients in their 1965 text *'Awareness of dying'* significantly contributed to these founding assumptions (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). This meant that Blumer's (1937, 1956, 1969) symbolic interactionism as well as Mead's (1932/2002, 1934/2015) and Dewey's (1938) pragmatism as philosophical paradigms initially influenced GTM (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), albeit if this influence was subconscious at first and not clearly accounted for within their 1967 seminal text *'The discovery of grounded theory'* (Eaves, 2001; Weed, 2009).



Glaser and Strauss' 'discovery' of GTM was not a 'fully-fledged' philosophical argument on how to conduct qualitative research. Instead, the 'discovery' was a 'polemical statement' (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p.7) on how to conduct systematic qualitative research which produced theory based on a set of rigorous qualitative data analysis procedures. The emphasis of having the outcome of a theory that was grounded within the data suggests that induction was at the core of the initial methodology. Hence, when Glaser and Strauss were contesting the overarching positivist view to conducting scientific research of that era, their attempts to justify GTM's value meant that GTM was labelled as a 'naïve, realist form of positivism, which holds that the veracity of a theory can be determined simply by recourse to the data' (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p.33).

To elevate the importance and value GT placed on data, Glaser and Strauss proposed the dictum of 'all is data'. Added to this was the principle that data analysis should not be postponed until the completion of data collection, but rather data collection and analysis were to be conducted simultaneously in what has been termed as the constant comparison method. The processes for how researchers collect data and then produce a theory from this were not clearly defined. This point has shaped many criticisms of the GTM - which will be covered in the forthcoming chapters - but also informed Strauss (1987) to construct an alternative version of the methodology, of which, the following section covers.

## **2.4 Straussian and Glaserian variants of grounded theory methodology**

By account of further revising his epistemological position, Strauss (1987) went onto refine some of GTM's features whereas Glaser (1978, 1992) continued to support the tenets of the original version. The bifurcation between Glaser and Strauss on how to conduct GTM has been well documented (Charmaz, 2000; Glaser, 1992, 1998; Howard-Payne, 2016;

Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994, 1998). Yet it is still considered both necessary and beneficial to briefly outline the main differences of interpretation in order to rationalise the current project's methodological structure and to explain the processes as to how substantive and middle-range theories were reached.

When Strauss began to consciously recognise symbolic interactionism and pragmatism was the point which created the separation from Glaser's view on how to conduct GTM (Kelle, 2005).<sup>12</sup> Strauss was a student at the University of Chicago which had driven the promotion of symbolic interactionism (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Symbolic interactionism is based upon the premise that social interactions, even within scientific inquiry, contribute toward the shaping of society through defining meaning for and of culture (Blumer, 1969; Hammersley, 1989). This line of inquiry has been further defined and advocated by Charmaz's (2006, 2014) development of a constructivist GTM which in itself further illustrates the multiple versions of GTM that have emerged since GTM's conception.<sup>13</sup> Although both Glaser and Strauss recognised that no researcher would enter the field of inquiry 'empty-headed' and free from preconceptions (Piggott, 2010), the most distinct difference between them was how to apply these preconceptions and knowledge in tandem with using literature when seeking theory generation (Heath & Cowley, 2004; Walker & Myrick, 2006).

Strauss (1987) espoused the centrality of the researcher's own experiences and knowledge, both past and present, as crucial in assisting the production of an initial understanding of a phenomenon. These preconceptions were cautioned to be only tentative inferences and that they should only be recognised and not relied upon when leading towards the development of a GT. This is in contrast to Glaser's (1978) upheld position in which

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<sup>12</sup> See chapter two in Corbin and Strauss (2015) for a more detailed overview of how symbolic interactionism and pragmatism influenced Strauss in particular.

<sup>13</sup> Justification for why a Straussian version of GTM has been selected over Charmaz's constructivist version is forthcoming in section 2.5.

personal knowledge and experience contributed to a markedly lesser extent as these were regarded as peripheral components.

Glaser (1978) perceived personal knowledge and experiences as potentially clouding influences to the analytical process. For Glaser (1978), should preconceptions feature more prominently, then this resulted in the prospect of the researcher overlooking and missing the discovery of the emergent theory. Glaser's (1978) preference of theoretical emergence via induction implied that any theory generation should be strictly embedded and thus grounded within the data, waiting to be discovered. This is in contrast to the Straussian variant (Corbin & Strauss, 1988, 2008, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) which recognised that the initial inductive aspects of the original GTM were over emphasised (Heath & Cowley, 2004). In the continued dialogue after Corbin and Strauss (1990) conceived their alternative version, Glaser's (1992) response here was the Straussian variant deviated from GTM's primacy of theory *emerging* from the data, instead, data was now being *forced to fit* the theory (Levers, 2013; Robrecht, 1995; Walker & Myrick, 2006); an argument which Strauss and Corbin (1994, 1998) strongly rejected.

For me, approaching the research with a 'blank-slate' in the view of Glaser's pure induction and for researchers to act as a neutral observer was not logically feasible because of the *a priori* judgements towards the research problem which have already been explicated in chapter one. Consequently, the Straussian variant of GTM has been applied, as it is an approach which advocates an 'open-mind' towards data analysis (Giles, King & de Lacey, 2013) and recognises the epistemological primacy of the relationship between researcher and the researched (Annells, 1997). Corbin and Strauss (1990) sustain GTM's original feature of researcher analytical memos, as these are still considered necessary to preserve a

close connection between the theory and the data.<sup>14</sup>

Building from the original process of data analysis, whereby intensive open coding is completed to identify the properties and dimensions of concepts within the data, Corbin and Strauss (1990) added the phase of axial coding. Open coding was designed to be extensive and resulted in the generation of an abundance of wide-ranging codes. Although detailed, the broad nature of open codes meant the additional phase of axial coding is required in order to produce a GT.

Axial coding enables the researcher to identify and interpret relationships amongst the codes to address the inter-related connections and the underlying social processes for the phenomenon under analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Combined with the constant comparison method of data analysis, I have interpreted and thus implemented the procedure of axial coding as a form of abductive analysis (Birks & Mills, 2011; Reichertz, 2010). This was in the view that axial coding allowed me to ‘reassemble data that were fractured during open coding’ and then conceptualise how ‘categories crosscut and link’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.124) with each other as well as with existing theories (Hallberg, 2006). This is performed so that a deeper understanding of how and why the basic social processes for the phenomena is reached.<sup>15</sup>

Identifying social processes is a point which Corbin and Strauss (2015) emphasise for developing GT. Social processes are defined as ‘the continual adjustments in those acts as persons attempt to adapt to changes... stability and social order, expanding our understanding of how persons or groups manage to go through everyday life’ (*ibid*, p.176).

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<sup>14</sup> Throughout the research process theoretical memos have been applied to signpost the abductive emergence of theory in regards to how I interpreted and conducted the constant comparison method of data analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Sections 2.6-7 of the thesis describe the project’s methods of data analysis to a greater degree.

<sup>15</sup> Again, a more detailed account and illustration of how the project applied this method of data analysis is provided later in the thesis (section 6.2.5 and figure nine [p.196]).

Moreover, the significance of researchers analysing the interplay between social structures and agency action is one which Strauss and Corbin (1998) have advocated.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, because Corbin and Strauss (2015) emphasise the importance of analysing social processes, this term was then integrated when the initial research problem was further refined:

- To understand the social processes for the ‘fast-track’ transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach.

The process of achieving a substantive and then middle-range theory rests on the completion of a final coding phase. This has been termed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as selective coding, whereby on the basis of verification and ‘fit’ the data are interpreted for developing a GT.<sup>17</sup> Corbin and Strauss’ (1990) acceptance of the researcher’s own past histories, previous experiences and knowledge to help *interpret* and shape a line of inquiry on a social phenomenon, to a degree, echoed my own perceptions at the time of the project’s formation. This meant, therefore, that Glaser’s (1978) overtly inductive approach to GTM, which emphasises the importance of researchers approaching inquiry and coding without reliance on preconceived analytical frameworks has not been employed. Moreover, Charmaz’s (2000, 2006) constructivist GTM approach has not been employed. The following section outlines Charmaz’s constructivist variant of GTM and in doing so further explains why a Straussian variant of GTM has instead been employed.

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<sup>16</sup> Please refer back to Strauss and Corbin’s (1998 - to section 2.1, p.17) statement on the value of analysing both structure and agency.

<sup>17</sup> Piggott (2010) has criticised this component of GTM. The thesis attends to this criticism within section 2.5.

## 2.5 Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory methodology

A former student of Glaser and Strauss, Charmaz (2014, p.16) conceived a constructivist version of GTM in which she offered a set of 'flexible guidelines' over 'methodological rules'. Keen to build upon the symbolic interactionist perspective which informed Strauss, Charmaz further extended the interpretivist portrayal towards scientific inquiry by recognising subjectivism of the researcher and researched to a much greater extent than Glaser and Strauss (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). With this in mind, Charmaz (2006) seeks to expose the multiple social realities of each research participant and thus avoids focussing on overarching themes and categories which attempt to explain 'truths'.

To achieve this, Charmaz's variant of GTM still upholds many of the central characteristics of the original GTM version, such as beginning the research process by collecting data and undertaking a constant comparison method of data analysis through an iterative process. Charmaz (2014, p.14), however, tailored some of the coding procedures to accommodate greater emphasis on the researcher's own subjective 'involvement in the construction and interpretation of data' along with the research participants' own interpretation and construction of their lived experiences in what Giddens (1979) referred to as the 'double hermeneutic'. On this point, Charmaz pays greater attention to regular memo writing in order to illustrate the reflexive processes researchers undertake in actively shaping the construction of the research and its results (Birks, Chapman & Francis, 2008).

Charmaz (2006, 2014), however, seems to be somewhat ambiguous on her recommendations towards applying inductive and deductive research strategies in her constructivist approach (Piggott, 2008). In saying that 'we start by gathering data' (Charmaz, 2006, p.10) and that 'as grounded theorists, we study our early data and begin to separate, sort and synthesise these data' (*ibid*, p.3), she adheres to an inductive research strategy. Yet her view of researchers to be not just sensitised to extant theory but have a 'firm grounding'

(Piggott, 2008, p.24) in them is suggestive somewhat of a deductive logic. The caveat which Charmaz proposes here is that she considers the role of extant theories and their contribution towards constructing a GT to be one that each theory should ‘earn its way into GT analysis’ (Piggott, 2008, p.74) through critical engagement with the literature (Thornberg, 2012). In a similar way to Straussian GTM, for Charmaz, the reliance on literature and existing theories should not supersede the analysis of data during the initial stages of coding, as extant theories should not be relied upon and that a ‘delicate balance’ between inductive and deductive research strategies should be attained (Piggott, 2008, p.24).

To summarise therefore, the Straussian variant of GTM has been employed as a result of two points: 1) it was considered to possess fewer ambiguities than Charmaz’s version and that it did not overly emphasise the inductive aspects that Glaser advocated, instead it better accommodated the ability to implement an abductive research strategy by utilising axial coding as a form of abduction; and; 2) most importantly, a Straussian GTM was considered the most applicable to address the research problem in its format at this point of the project and had the better potential to generate a theory for the phenomenon. The second point is now explained further.

Because I wanted to understand the social processes of how elite athletes negotiated a ‘fast-tracked’ transition into high-performance coaching roles, recognition of the broader environmental and contextual issues was important for me (Cooley, 2010). This was particularly important as I wanted to study both agency and structure to explain the dynamic nature of the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A Straussian GTM was considered most applicable to study the actions and interactions of such a population for how they negotiated the recruitment process, how they acquired coaching knowledge from their competitive-athletic experiences and how they adapted to the changing circumstances of their role and their identities. Hence, a Straussian GTM was considered the most beneficial version and a better ‘fit’ to my research statement for investigating how such individuals

adapted to the changing circumstances during their career transitions.

The methodological discussion hitherto has been set away from considering how research within sport has applied GTM. The next section attends to this point by recognising the debates on the conduct of GTM within sports research. In turn, this leads onto contextualising how the procedure of the thesis' methodological structure has been applied.

## **2.6 Grounded theory within sports research**

The application of GTM within the field of sports coaching and the sociology of sport has not received a significant amount of attention. This may be based on the numerous criticisms which GTM has received (e.g. Garratt, 2013; Thomas & James, 2006), or because of the considered debate between how GTM has been misinterpreted (e.g. Holt & Tamminen, 2010; Weed, 2009, 2010). On this point, Weed (2009) critically reviewed how sport and exercise psychology studies had applied GTM and identified that its use had grown significantly since 2000.<sup>18</sup> In so doing, Weed (2009, p.509) reported concerns on the amount of studies which in his view had incorrectly applied the label of GT because of a failure to 'meet even the most basic quality criteria for GT'. Weed (2009) recommended eight GTM criteria (or 'canons'<sup>19</sup>) should be followed and clearly reported in the publication of any GTM manuscript which proclaimed to have developed a GT. These 'canons' are shown overleaf in figure three. Within Weed's (2009) review, and in a follow up article (Weed, 2010), it was contended that only applying a selection of GTM components detracts from

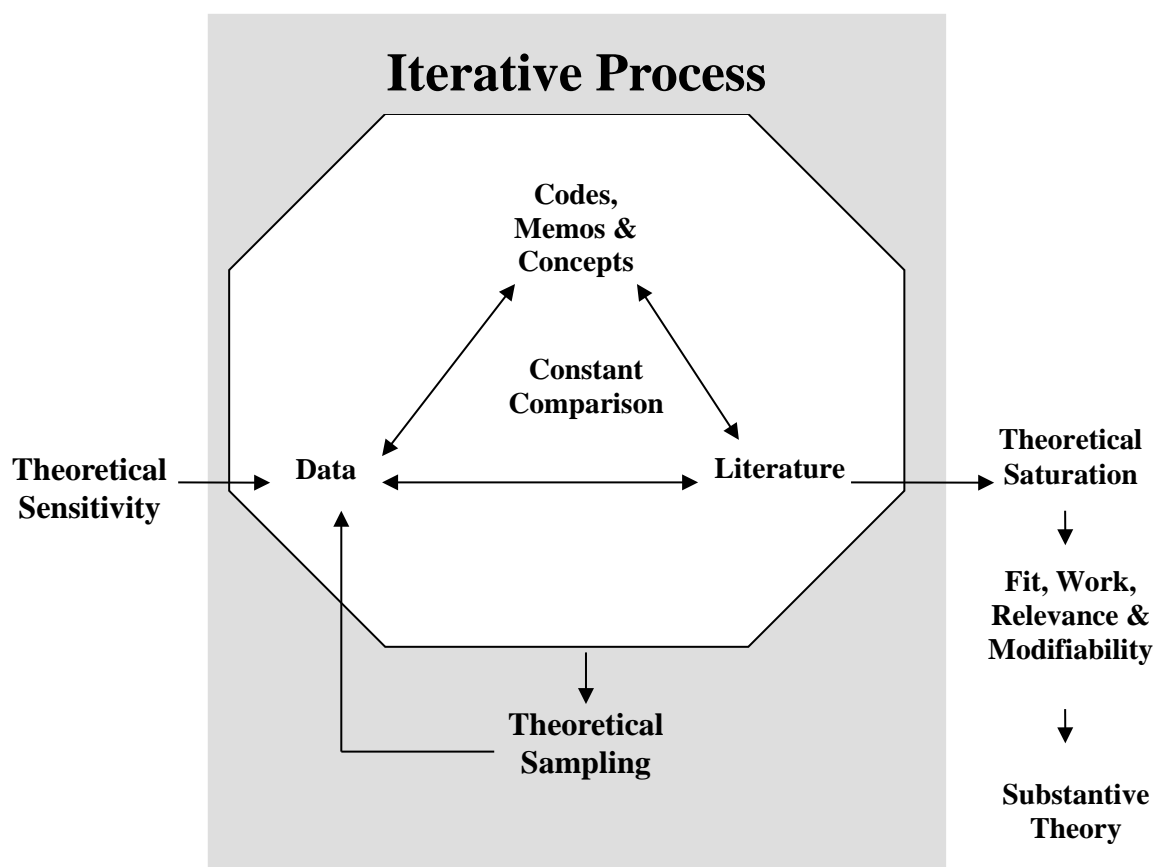
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<sup>18</sup> Since the publication of Weed's (2009) review, there have been a number of additional studies that have used GTM with sports psychology (e.g. Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011) with a further review by Hutchinson et al. (2011) having also been undertaken in the field of exercise psychology.

<sup>19</sup> The term 'canons' is one which has been taken from Corbin and Strauss' (1990) publication '*Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria*'.



the ability of the project achieving the micro-level of analysis of the studies' own objectives and the macro-level of analysis for significantly contributing to the research area in generating a GT.<sup>20</sup> It has meant that on this basis, for Weed (2009, 2010) at least, achieving the final outcome of constructing a substantive, middle-range or formal theory can be critiqued, and ultimately, in such cases, the label of GT cannot be applied. This assertion rests heavily on the point that such research, which has only applied a medley of procedures drawn from GTM (Holt & Tamminen, 2010; Pidgeon & Henwood, 2004), omits the epistemological necessities that shape the analytical process for constructing theory and 'for an accurate assessment of study quality to be made' (Hutchinson et al., 2011, p.266).



**Figure 3 The grounded theory methodology process (Weed, 2009)**

<sup>20</sup> The same argument had also been presented by Weed (2005) in an article on policy processes for sport and tourism.

Weed's (2010, p.416) attempt to spark debate for attaining 'methodological heterogeneity' and his espousal of GTM 'canons' has been critiqued. Like Holt and Tamminen (2010), Piggott (2010, p.426) argued that such methodological rigidity unintentionally brought Weed's position to be a sense of 'methodological essentialism' that 'stifled debate' about how to conduct GTM across a number of disciplines. Piggott (2010, p.426) also claims that Thomas and James' (2006) criticisms of GTM actually reprised as a form of 'methodological anarchism' which constrains the debate on the conduct and development of qualitative research. In response, Piggott (2008, 2010), therefore, constructed a modified GTM founded upon Popperian philosophy of critical rationalism (Popper, 1972) whereby 'the movement towards substantive theory therefore entails a series of attempted falsifications, instead of verification and saturation' (Piggott, 2010, p.428).

Piggott (2010) argued how in a critical rationalist adaption of GTM, induction is replaced by initial abductive logic which then progressively becomes deductive over the course of the research project's iterative process. This research strategy was judged to simultaneously overcome the concern grounded theorists have outlined on the use of theoretical sensitivity in regards to how previous or existing knowledge is applied (see Dunne, 2011; Thornberg, 2012). Moreover, Piggott (2010, p.428-9) claimed that the finality of theoretical saturation made 'very little sense' to a critical rationalist viewpoint because 'research concludes arbitrarily' with an acknowledged presence of fallibility that makes any proclaimed theories to be only tentative.

I agree with the critical rationalist notion of fallibility in conjunction with the notion that pure induction is, as Popper (1974) described, an optical illusion. Consequently, the GTM 'canon' of theoretical saturation has not been integrated into the thesis. Instead the thesis' results are only labelled as 'tentative' as they are only relative to the experiences of the thesis' participants. Yet it can be proposed that critical rationalism itself upholds a methodological essentialism and foundationalism based on setting tightly controlled

parameters of its methods and methodologies (Ulrich, 2006). Indeed, as Ulrich (2006, p.7) claims, critical rationalism is founded upon the ‘assumption that validity and relevance of research results depend essentially on the methodologies used’. Consequently, Piggott’s (2008, 2010) modified realist version of Charmaz’s GTM, which emphasises making falsifications and testing theories, has not been applied. Instead, with the exception of theoretical saturation, the remaining seven ‘canons’ of GTM which Weed (2009, 2010) and Holt and Tamminen (2010) agreed upon have been employed. The following section outlines how the thesis has operationalised each of these ‘canons’.

## **2.7 Operationalising grounded theory**

This section is designed to provide an outline of how a Straussian GTM was employed through the course of the thesis. This section is therefore structured in a way which defines each of the ‘canons’ associated to a Straussian GTM and then an explanation of how they have been implemented throughout the thesis. In so doing, this section acts as an index to signpost the reader to later chapters where the ‘canons’ have been applied.

### **2.7.1 Iterative process**

The thesis has applied an iterative process as it has conducted three empirical studies. These studies have been referred to as ‘iterations’ within the thesis and it denotes the chapters of each empirical study (see figure one). During each iteration, data collection was conducted simultaneously with data analysis and reference back to the literature. Although each

iteration was completed separately, they have built upon each other as the findings of the first iteration theoretically informed the nature of the second iteration. Combined, the first and second iterations theoretically informed the nature of the third iteration.

The first iteration has sampled senior directors of high-performance AF and RU clubs to investigate why they supported and even perpetuated the ‘fast-track’ pathway by appointing former elite athletes into high-performance coaching roles (chapter four). The second iteration investigated the same issues with academy managers of elite AF and RU clubs. This iteration extended the first iteration’s research questions as a result of the findings that emerged from iteration one (chapter five). The third and final iteration returns to the initial research question of wanting ‘*to understand the social processes for the ‘fast-track’ transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach in men’s association football and rugby union*’ (chapter six). The design of the thesis was not pre-determined. The need to analyse how elite athletes were fast-tracked into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles from senior directors’ perspectives was only identified after undertaking the theoretical sensitivity phase (chapter three). The following section outlines what theoretical sensitivity is and how the thesis has applied it.

### **2.7.2 Theoretical sensitivity**

Theoretical sensitivity has been a fundamental component of the thesis and has been principally related to my own self-reflexivity and positionality as a researcher. GTM promotes researchers to have an open mind toward research but avoid theoretical paralysis by being too reliant on existing theories. An over reliance on existing theories undermines the integrity of a GT project (Weed, 2009, 2017). Therefore, an exposition of my own analytical knowledge as a researcher that has been engendered from my own personal history

and understanding of existing theories and concepts has been acknowledged in a theoretical sensitivity phase in order to ‘provide a point of departure for data collection’ (Weed, 2017, p.152).

In this regard, although I reflected on my past experiences within the field of AF and how these had inspired the research question (chapter one), at the beginning of the research project I was in a very different position to my previous athletic and coaching roles. I have undertaken the research in a part-time capacity as my full-time employment was as an Instructor in Sports Social Sciences at the University of Lincoln’s School of Sport of Exercise Sciences. Here, I was mandated to teach on theoretical and practical modules associated to sports coaching and the sociology of sport. Subsequently, in addition to having experiences and assumptions towards the research project before it commenced, throughout the course of the research I *continued* to be engaged with the literature in order to satisfy the basic expectations of educating undergraduate sports students. This further compounded my decision to employ a Straussian GTM, as Strauss advocated the ‘researcher to be personally engaged with the research in an attempt to better describe and understand the world as the participants see it’ (Howard-Payne, 2016, p.53). Such an epistemological view opposed the Glaserian approach which espoused the researcher to take a more detached observational role in order to promote objectivity (Strauss, 1987).

Consequently, chapter three of the thesis, which is placed before any of the thesis’ iterations of empirical data collection, is a theoretical sensitivity chapter. Here, an overview of literature is presented and identifies extant theories and concepts which I was aware of and which have been previously used to conceptualise coach development. I did not consider it a true reflection of how the thesis was conducted, nor how the sub-research questions were formed if I did not include the theoretical sensitivity chapter at this point of the thesis. Indeed, the theoretical sensitivity chapter had a fivefold purpose: 1) it was to place into context the research which has already been conducted on coach education, learning and coaches’

developmental pathways that I was already aware of and could not bracket away from my analysis when collecting empirical data; 2) justify why the thesis has taken the decision to qualitatively analyse the social processes which competitive-athletes negotiate when transitioning into post-athletic high-performance coaching careers; 3) justify the project's value; 4) further refine and specify the research problem, and; 5) justify how the first iteration's sample of senior club directors of high-performance AF and RU clubs was theoretically identified.

The value of conducting a theoretical sensitivity phase enabled me to identify limitations of existing study's samples and sampling criteria. The theoretical sensitivity phase therefore informed the thesis of its first theoretical sample which is the point of discussion for the next section.

### **2.7.3 Theoretical sample**

Within the thesis each iteration of empirical data collection commences with a section entitled 'theoretical sample'. The rationale for including this is to justify the theoretical basis for how each iteration's samples were identified. For a project employing a GTM, theoretical sampling is a purposeful procedure to target specific populations based on theoretical relevance they have for the phenomena under investigation (Holt & Tamminen, 2010). For iteration one, the senior directors of AF and RU elite clubs were theoretically sampled after it had become apparent that the existing literature had not investigated the structural components influencing the perpetuation of the 'fast-track' pathway. Indeed, the existing literature on coach development had applied a coach-centric orientation when analysing coach learning, pathways and efficacy. Semi-structured interviews were also

identified as the favoured method of data collection. In turn, limitations of this method for reporting on long term coach development were identified which further informed the first iteration to theoretically sample senior club directors.

The theoretical sample of academy directors was identified as a result of conducting iteration one. A prominent theme that emerged from iteration one was the importance the senior directors placed on appointing elite athletes into coaching roles because of wanting to socially reproduce the club's culture (section 4.3.4). On this basis, there was a recorded preference to 'draw through' their club's elite athletes. During this social process these athletes were socialised to the club culture through informal and formalised coaching placements within the club's academy. It is here where the role of academy managers was perceived by the senior directors as being important. Yet the senior directors were unaware, or at least had very little knowledge of what the academy directors actually practiced in order to socialise the elite athletes to the club culture. Therefore, the second iteration (chapter five) theoretically sampled academy directors to conceptualise and explain these social processes.

Finally, the third iteration (chapter six) also commences with a theoretical sample section (section 6.1) which includes an appraisal of existing literature's findings and the data collection methods they employed. This iteration returns to directly analysing the thesis' overarching research statement by sampling individuals who experience the 'fast-tracking' transition into high-performance coaching roles. Based on the themes that had emerged from the first two iterations, the design of the third iteration was adapted to employ two points of data collection. Without having taken the time to appraise the existing literature and draw upon the emerging themes of the first two iterations, I believe that the third iteration would not have produced the rich and original findings which it has.

#### **2.7.4 Codes, memos and concepts**

Codes are the individual components of the data which describe the phenomena (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Concepts aim to conceptualise the phenomena (Weed, 2009). Data analysis consisted of descriptive line by line coding to produce ‘free nodes’ that described the characteristics of the raw data. Open codes consisted of singular words or short phrases. A higher order of data analysis has then been applied in alignment with the preferred abductive research strategy whereby the initial line by line coding categories were reassembled and reinterpreted in order to conceptualise the data and to identify linking categories. These concepts were constantly compared with others and grouped together when they shared common descriptive characteristics. Themes were then produced to summarise these commonalities behind why and how the phenomenon occurred. Abstraction at a macro-level of analysis was then performed by identifying the shared properties the themes possessed with existing concepts associated to established theoretical frameworks. Concepts from established theoretical frameworks were only applied to the data after their critical appraisal and applicability to explain the social processes underpinning the phenomenon’s existence.

To uphold the consistency of the thesis conducting a truly iterative approach, when appropriate, the concepts and themes that arose from previous iterations were extended and built upon. At the same time, newly emerging concepts were also identified and taken forward to inform the nature of the research questions and data analysis in the following iterations. The thesis has paid particular attention to detail this process within each of its iterations, either by highlighting how previous concepts acted as sensitising concepts to inform specific interview questions (see tables 11 [p.194] and 12 [p.208] for examples of this) and how the concepts informed data analysis.

To support this process, research memos have been made throughout the thesis.



Memos are the researcher's own 'written records of analysis' that are regularly noted and analysed during the research process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.217). There are two types of memos within the thesis: operational and theoretical (Piggott, 2008). These have been integrated into thesis and the reporting of the results to clarify how I interpreted the research process during data collection and analysis. For example, an operational memo has been included in section 5.1 (p.119) to further signify how the sample of academy directors was actually theoretically sampled after the first iteration identified that senior directors were encouraging elite athletes to practice as coaches within an academy setting. Moreover, to further illustrate and provide a narrative of the abductive research process, each iteration concludes with a theoretical memo section. These sections interrogate any emerging data and concepts in relation with old data and concepts. At this point, further literature has been drawn upon to advance interrogation of the data and to validate the generation of these concepts to take forward as sensitising concepts in the following iterations.

The thesis has undertaken what can be considered as an unorthodox approach to the data analysis by conducting analysis at the macro-level. By drawing upon concepts at the macro-level, it has not been my intention to either corroborate or validate existing theory. What has been my intention is to only draw upon existing concepts if they are applicably relevant to the data. I have only accepted these concepts after critically appraising them.

By undertaking such a method of data analysis, the first iteration identified the value of Bourdieu's concepts. Although these acted as sensitising concepts for the second iteration, the actual data that emerged from this iteration identified that there were limitations to the extent in which Bourdieu's concepts could conceptualise the social processes enacted by the academy directors. Subsequently, a theoretical juncture arises partway through the second iteration whereby Foucauldian concepts are considered and appraised. Within the iteration's theoretical memo section (section 5.6), the interplay between data, literature and theory at a macro-level has been implemented whereby limitations are exposed. In so doing, these

relevant concepts have acted as sensitising concepts for the third iteration. Again, these have been interpreted throughout the data collection and analysis phases, and then critically appraised in unison with the data and literature in the final theoretical memo chapter (chapter 7). In turn, the conclusions of this macro-level of analysis have informed the thesis' final middle-range theory (chapter eight). Moreover, in light that Bourdieu and Foucault's concepts have been taken to develop the thesis' GT, additional concepts associated to Goffman's theoretical framework have also been appraised and critiqued. Hence the resulting GT does not merely describe the social processes of the phenomenon but advances our conceptual and theoretical understanding of the associated concepts which underpin the GT.

Finally, each iteration concludes with a methodological memo section. These sections act as a chronological research diary and give prominence to how I interpreted some of the issues faced during the research process. After the completion of each iteration these chapters act as reflective moments to summarise how I was able to overcome barriers to participant recruitment and how my own position as a researcher may have influenced the conduct of interviews with 'elite' samples. These sections are finalised with a discussion of the implications to overcome such issues and to give the reader confidence that the thesis has implemented a truly iterative approach.

### **2.7.5 Constant comparison**

The constant comparison method of data collection and analysis provides GTM with its distinctive feature. As Weed (2017, p.152) claims, 'the iterative process in GT research is held together and underpinned by constant comparison'. It is the continual process of data

analysis between multiple data sets, researcher memos, concepts and literature throughout the entirety of the research process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It has been extremely difficult to clearly show within the narrative of the thesis how I conducted this process. However, the inclusion of the thesis' theoretical memo and methodological memo sections is an attempt to depict how each iteration's data was continually compared with previous data, the literature and researcher memos.

One way which each iteration employed the constant comparison method was that data analysis was completed as soon as each participant had confirmed their acceptance of the data via transcript member checking, or the timescale for completing this had elapsed. Each iteration did not make the commonly recorded mistake of completing all data collection before analysing the data sets as a whole. Indeed, this was a fundamental criticism of Weed's (2009) when evaluating the mistakes of GT studies conducted within the sports and exercise discipline.

### **2.7.6 Fit, work, relevance and modifiability**

'Fit' denotes the success for how closely the theory explains the phenomena under investigation. Adherence to the constant comparison method has ensured that the resultant GT 'fits' the phenomenon. The thesis' concluding chapter (chapter eight) pays particular attention to fully explain each of these aspects in relation to how the GT productively contributes and thus 'fits' with the research problem. The emerging GT has been ground to the data throughout the thesis to explain the social processes and actions of both agency and structure that explain the 'fast-track' transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach in men's AF and RU.

Judgement on whether a theory ‘works’ is made if it offers ‘analytical explanations for the processes and problems in the context it seeks to refer’ (Weed, 2009, p.506). The thesis’ GT ‘works’ as it critically conceptualises the phenomenon under analysis. Again, the concepts and final GT have been ground to the data and this process has been demonstrated throughout the reporting of results and during the theoretical memos.

‘Relevance’ is intended to signify that any theory developed is directly relatable to the concerns and realities of those the phenomenon affects. The reporting of results has identified the realities of the coaches who negotiate the career transition and the directors who have influence on the pathways. All populations have been identified through rigorous theoretical sampling processes which precedes each iteration.

### **2.7.7 Theoretical saturation**

Theoretical saturation is the point of the research whereby no new theoretical insights are developed. It is this point which signifies when data analysis is complete (Weed, 2017). As has previously been reported in section 2.6 (p.29), the thesis has not applied theoretical saturation as a principle. Although the thesis stops empirical data collection at the end of the third iteration (chapter six), the fact that a formal theory has not been developed has meant that theoretical saturation has not been reached when addressing this phenomenon. Instead, a middle-range theory has been proposed (chapter eight) as this is specific to the populations of male elite athletes who are ‘fast-tracked’ into high-performance coaching roles within the sports of AF and RU only within the context of England. The following section outlines the differences between these types of theories.

### **2.7.8 Substantive, middle range and formal theories**

A substantive theory is a theory which is specific to a particular context and does not seek to be generalizable to other settings (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A middle-range theory is developed by extending and abstracting concepts from substantive theories (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Abstractions of middle-range theories are used as a platform to study ‘phenomena under a variety of conditions’ (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p.23) across different domains which then enable formal theory to be developed.

The intention from the outset of the project was to attain a substantive GT on how and why male RU and AF elite athletes negotiated the ‘fast-track’ transition into a post-athletic high-performance coaching role within each of the contexts. Although a substantive theory for each context was initially intended, iteration three found only two discernible differences recorded between the two AF and RU populations. Firstly, four out of the five AF coaches occupied only one coaching role during the intervening period between the first and second interviews. These were largely within the field of youth academies. This pathway was in direct contrast to the RU coaches pathways as six out of the 15 RU coaches fulfilled multiple coaching roles in a range of fields other than just youth academies. Secondly, the RU coaches rejected their formal coach education course’s ‘espoused course culture’ in contrast to their AF counterparts. These findings are reported within iteration three’s discussion and results (section 6.4). Consequently, the thesis’ final chapter (chapter eight) denotes the middle-range GT which has emerged after studying the two contexts of AF and RU. Here the concepts from the two populations have been brought together to explain the processes and actions for the phenomenon. The reader is encouraged to refer back to figure two (p.19) to see a visual illustration of the difference between the theory types and the aims of the thesis. A formal theory of elite athletes negotiating the fast-track career trajectory into

a post-athletic high-performance coaching career can be developed by extending analysis to a number of additional sports across a range of international contexts. The abstraction of each substantive theory that arises from each context can produce multiple middle-range theories. In turn, the abstraction of these middle-range theories can enable a formal theory of the phenomena to be developed (Suddaby, 2006; Weed, 2009). The thesis provides recommendations for future research to develop a formal theory of the phenomenon in section 8.4.

The next chapter introduces the theoretical sensitivity phase. As can be viewed from figure three (p.28), Weed's model of GTM coheres with a Straussian GTM as it commences with a theoretical sensitivity phase which acts as a platform to inform and direct empirical investigation.

## Chapter 3 - Theoretical sensitivity

Although the extent to which a theoretical sensitivity phase is applied in GTM is a source of division between the multiple versions (see Backman & Kyngäs, 1999; Dunne, 2011; Howard-Payne, 2016; Ramalho, Adams, Huggard & Hoare, 2015; Thornberg, 2012), a Straussian GTM accepts the use of existing theories that are found within the literature. Acknowledgement of extant theories is set within the theoretical sensitivity phase, and in turn, has helped identify a theoretical sample which informed the direction of empirical data collection.

Indeed, Corbin and Strauss (2015) advocate that in their version of GTM, researchers should not conduct a full orthodox literature review as a starting point for research, but instead, conduct only an overview of literature (Backman & Kyngäs, 1999; Dunne, 2011; Giles et al., 2013; Ramalho et al., 2015). In the words of Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.49), an extensive undertaking of an orthodox literature review can result in researchers becoming ‘nearly paralyzed in an analytical sense’ prior to conducting any analysis of their own. Yet Corbin and Strauss (1990) affirmed that a literature overview simultaneously displays the researcher’s own theoretical sensitivity toward the phenomena of investigation by acknowledging existing theoretical frameworks which can inform coding and guide the direction of empirical study concerning who to sample and by which means. Thereby, at this stage of the project, because the intention was to avoid analytical paralysis and succumbing to a comprehensive deductive research strategy, whilst at the same time regarding completely inductive research as infeasible, the following section of the thesis conducts an *overview* of literature related to the thesis’ line of enquiry.

The literature within this overview covers coach education, learning and development from a range of studies embedded within multiple research paradigms. The purpose for this is fivefold: 1) it is to place into context the research which has already been

conducted on coach education, learning and coaches' developmental pathways; 2) justify why the thesis has taken the decision to qualitatively analyse the social processes which competitive-athletes negotiate when transitioning into post-athletic high-performance coaching careers; 3) justify the project's value; 4) further refine and specify the research problem, and; 5) justify how the first iteration's sample of senior club directors of high-performance AF and RU clubs was theoretically identified.

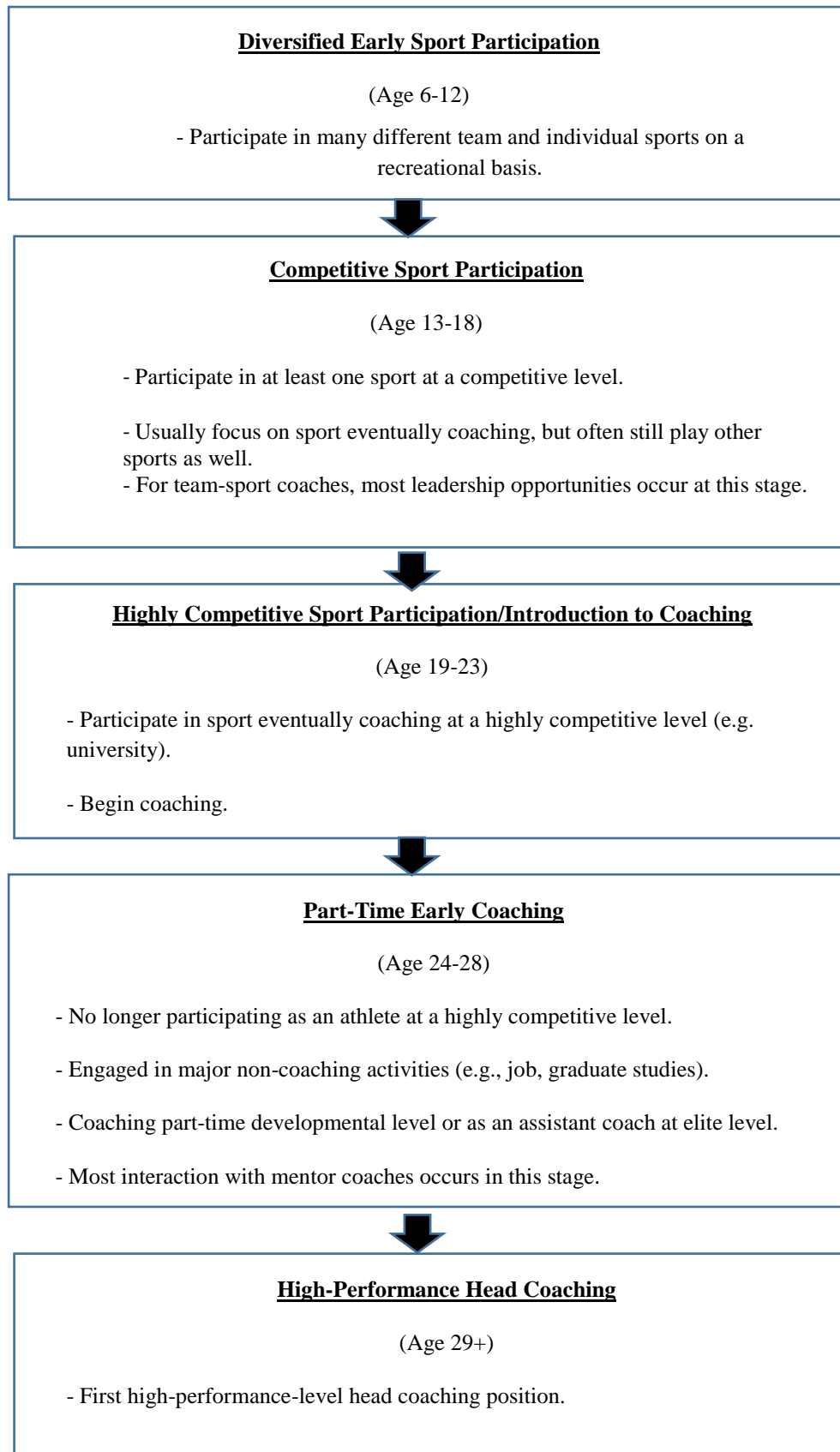
### **3.1 An overview of coach development**

#### **3.1.1 Former competitive-athletic experiences of high-performance coaches**

The study of coach developmental pathways has received significant interest from researchers seeking to understand how coaches develop the skills and knowledge in reaching a high-performance coaching role or the status of an expertise coach (Bloom, Crumpton & Anderson, 1999; Carter & Bloom, 2009; Christensen, 2013; Erickson, Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007; Gilbert, Côté & Mallett, 2006; Gilbert, Lichtenwaldt, Gilbert, Zelezny & Côté 2009; Irwin, Hanton & Kerwin, 2004; Koh, Mallett & Wang, 2011; Morrow & Howieson, 2014; Nash & Sproule, 2009; Purdy & Potrac, 2014; Schempp, McCullick & Mason, 2006; Schinke, Bloom & Salmela, 1995). A consistent finding in these studies is that many high-performance coaches possess tenure as competitive elite athletes in their respective sport. For example, building upon the work of studies which sought to define high-performance coach pathways (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke & Salmela, 1998; Schinke et al., 1995), Erickson and colleagues (2007) analysed the sporting experiences of 19 Canadian high-performance coaches when attaining a role as a high-performance coach. The authors presented a 'stage model' (figure four, p.45) which illustrated the successive stages of the pathway the coaches all undertook. Each stage was related to both the coaches' ages and level of athletic participation/performance, and level of coaching. Stages three and



four show the gradual transition made by athletes who moved into initial coaching roles. Stage five shows the full transition into in a high-performance coaching role at the age of 29 plus (figure four).



**Figure 4 Stages of developmental sport experiences of high-performance sport coaches (Erickson et al., 2007)**

The 'stage model' informed Christensen's (2013) semi-structured interviews in her study on the developmental pathways of 10 high-performance Danish coaches.<sup>21</sup> It was identified here that all 10 coaches had prior athletic experience at a high-performance level in the sports that they coached. Sherwin, Campbell and MacIntyre (2017, p.273-4) obtained data from 19 'highly experienced' Irish coaches and found 'six of the coaches played at the highest level of their sport, two of whom played at international level'. Similarly, Werthner and Trudel (2009) identified that 13 out of the 15 sampled high-performance coaches were previously national level athletes and that six of these were Olympic level athletes. Consequently, Werthner and Trudel (2009) labelled the pathway from elite athlete to high-performance coach as 'idiosyncratic'.

Werthner and Trudel's (2009) view has been echoed by Kelly (2008) within the high-performance context of AF. In his study on the role of British and Irish AF managers, Kelly (2008, p.410) claimed that the prospect of becoming a head coach or manager at a professional club had become the 'exclusive preserve of former players'. Further supporting this statement, Mielke (2007) has quantified the number of head coaches with an elite competitive athletic tenure who were in post at clubs competing professionally in the National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the English Premier League (EPL). Mielke (2007, p.108) reported 'in baseball, basketball and football (soccer), between 60-80% of the head coaches had been players within that level of their sports'. Moreover, at the time of analysis, all but one of the 20 head coaches of EPL teams had competed at some professional level of AF. Subsequently, in the process of coach development, learning skills and knowledge for a coaching role has largely been associated to be embedded within coaches' former experiences as high-performance competitive-athletes in the same sports they go onto coach

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<sup>21</sup> The coaches operated within the sports of badminton (3), rowing (2), handball (2), swimming (2) and AF (1).

in a post-athletic capacity (Cushion et al., 2003; Werthner & Trudel, 2009).

Consistent with findings from other studies conducted on the developmental pathways of high-performance coaches (Bloom et al., 1998; Gilbert et al., 2006; Lynch & Mallett, 2006; Purdy & Potrac, 2014; Schinke et al., 1995; Salmela, 1995), Erickson and colleagues (2007) concluded that experience as an athlete in the same sport that individuals attained post-athletic coaching careers in was an important setting for high-performance coaches' development. In addition to this, Mallett, Rynne and Billett (2016) quantitatively analysed the valued learning experiences of novice and experienced high-performance coaches. The authors reported that experience as an athlete was valued highly over other activities at the beginning and middle of a coaching career but the perceived value the coaches attributed to a competitive-athletic background declined during the progression of their coaching careers. Furthermore, echoing the results of Salmela (1995), Erickson and colleagues (2007, p.311) concluded that experiences as a competitive-athlete were not 'an absolutely necessary area of experience for individuals who eventually became high-performance coaches in either team or individual sports'. Indeed, Carter and Bloom (2009) recorded that their sample of six male Canadian university coaches (four basketball, one volleyball and one ice hockey) attained a coaching role at a high-performance level which surpassed their own previous athletic level. Nonetheless, even though Carter and Bloom (2009, p.432) recorded that 'the participants suggested that their lack of elite athletic experiences was an initial hindrance to their development', all of the study participants did have some form of experience as athletes in the sports they went on to coach.

The findings from the cited literature indicate that the processes of coach development are more nuanced than simply possessing a background as an athlete. Indeed, analysis on the sources and forms of coaches' knowledge is one that has received a growing amount of focus since the turn of the twenty-first century because of the criticisms which have been levelled at such stage-based models of high-performance coaches' development.

The next section outlines these criticisms further.

### **3.1.2. Coach education, learning and development**

Although the findings of studies analysing coach developmental pathways have added insight and extended our understanding on the developmental stages high-performance coaches follow, such stage based models have been criticised for their depiction of high-performance coaches' pathways as a 'generic stepwise model that describes careers in terms of age-specific and chronologically ordered milestones' that are 'linear' and 'one-dimensional' (Christensen, 2013, p.99-100). Recognition of the cultural contexts has also been overlooked along with the individual narratives of each sampled coach (Barker-Ruchti, Lindgren, Hofmann, Sinning & Shelton, 2014; Cushion, 2007; Christensen, 2014; De Martin-Silva, Fonseca, Jones, Morgan & Mesquita, 2015; Purdy & Potrac, 2014) as coach learning and thus development has been viewed as a 'messy' and 'fragmented' process (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004, p.1). Consequently, the assertion that these stage models of high-performance coaches' career trajectories are a-theoretical can be levelled, and that they have omitted any attempt to explain the social processes that contribute to the career trajectories of individual coaches. Nevertheless, there is a growing amount of literature which has attempted to provide theoretical explanations for high-performance coaches' development by analysing how these coaches are educated and learn the skills and knowledge required for the role.

Firstly, however, it is worthwhile noting how the terms of coach education, learning and development have been interpreted by the literature. As Piggott (2015, p.284) has explained, coach education is a 'subcategory' of coach learning, which, in turn, is a 'subcategory of coach development'. Coach education has been applied to collectively note

the forms of learning which coaches access (Piggott, 2015). In this sense, the literature on coach development as an overarching subject has primarily utilised the work of Coombs and Ahmed (1974) to firstly categorise and then secondly investigate the formal, informal and non-formal learning environments which coaches learn and source knowledge from throughout their development (Mallett et al., 2009). Formal education and learning has been conceptualised to be ‘associated with institutional structures and (guided) delivery, whereas the informal situations may be assumed to provoke learning but are likely to be unguided and/or incidental’ (*ibid*, p.327). Informal situations arise as a product of coaches’ experiences when situated within social structures as part of their development (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006). Non-formal learning takes the form of conferences or seminars that are organised functions external to the delivery of formal settings (Nelson, Cushion & Potrac, 2006).

Furthermore, Werthner and Trudel (2006) applied the work of Moon’s (1999, 2004) experiential learning framework to extend insight into how coaches learn the skills and knowledge for their roles. Coombs and Ahmed’s (1974) framework was extended here as Moon (1999, 2004) categorised formal and non-formal sources of knowledge under the one category of ‘mediated learning’ whilst informal learning was categorised under ‘unmediated learning’. There has been a considerable lack of literature examining sports coaches’ non-formal learning in comparison to formal and informal learning. Because of this, the proceeding overview of literature on coach development is structured in a manner that reflects Moon’s (1999, 2004) experiential learning framework by respectively considering the literature on coaches’ mediated and unmediated sources of knowledge.

### 3.1.2.1 Mediated learning: Formal coach education and its limited impact

The majority of research on coach education and development has centred its focus on the formal learning contexts of national governing bodies' (NGBs) coaching qualifications (e.g. Cassidy, Potrac & McKenzie, 2006; Chesterfield, Potrac & Jones, 2010; Cushion et al., 2003; Galvan, Fyall & Culpan, 2012; Hussain, Trudel, Patrick & Rossi, 2012; Piggott, 2012, 2015; Roberts, 2010; Stodter & Cushion, 2014; Townsend & Cushion, 2017; Vargas-Tonsing, 2007; Vella, Oades & Crowe, 2011; *inter-alia*). Although the structural format of formal coach accreditation is not entirely consistent on an international scale, each nation's formal coach education systems are structured hierarchically.<sup>22</sup> Focussing on the UK's coach education structures specifically, the government has seen coach accreditation as crucial for raising coaching standards (Taylor & Garratt, 2010). This view has resulted in government strategies having provided NGBs of sport with the mandate to educate and certify their coaching workforces in order to 'safeguard' (Garratt, Piper & Taylor, 2013) participants by ensuring that minimum standards of coaching competency are reached (Abraham & Collins, 1998). Thus, if an individual has an ambition to become a coach, they are thereby required to enlist onto their sport's NGB formal coach accreditation schemes and demonstrate the skills and knowledge to pass competency-based outcomes, on which they are assessed (Cushion et al., 2010).

NGB's formal coach education has been recorded both internationally and nationally to have limited effect on coach development as it is not valued by coaching practitioners (Jones et al., 2003; Mallett, et al., 2009; Piggott, 2012; Sherwin et al., 2017). This view is largely founded upon the point that formal coach education is considered to indoctrinate coaching practitioners into a specified one size fits all method of coaching (Cassidy et al., 2006; Mallett et al., 2009; Mesquita, Riberio, Santos & Morgan, 2014; Nelson & Cushion,

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<sup>22</sup> See Piggott (2015) for a critique on how the UK structures its coach education accreditation schemes and Hussain et al. (2012) for an overview of Canada's coach certification structure.

2006; Nelson et al., 2006; Piggott, 2012, 2015; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2015). In this sense, NGB formal coach education courses present a gold standard of coaching (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Jones & Turner, 2006) that is delivered in a didactic ‘top-down approach’ (Côté, 2006, p.220) by course tutors to course candidates.

Such negative perceptions are not universal, however. Specifically, within the UK, when comparing one novice and one expert coach’s learning experiences, Nash and Sproule (2011, p.154) identified that the novice coach was ‘very enthusiastic and accepting’ towards the NGB’s swimming coach education course and utilised such sources of knowledge to help with their coaching development. This is in contrast to the experienced coach who independently utilised greater amounts of informal sources of knowledge (see also Erickson, Bruner, MacDonald & Côté, 2008; Mallett et al., 2016). Moreover, formal coach education courses have also been valued when they have been devised in a way which opposes the aforementioned didactic traits and instead promote collegiate open discussion in a mode consistent with constructivist attitudes towards teaching and learning (Cassidy et al., 2006; Griffiths, Armour & Cushion, 2016; McCullick, Belcher & Schempp, 2005; Piggott, 2012, 2015; Vargas-Tonsing, 2007; Werthner & Trudel, 2006).

### **3.1.2.2 Un-mediated and informal learning: The development of tacit knowledge**

Moon (1999, 2004) classifies un-mediated learning to encompass informal learning. Combined, un-mediated and informal learning represent the socialisation processes of coaches’ everyday experiences and the conscious and subconscious knowledge that is acquired from these experiences (Trudel, Culver & Werthner, 2013). Coaches have been reported to value un-mediated learning and informal sources of knowledge in contrast to formal coach education courses (Erickson et al., 2008; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2015; Wright,



Trudel & Culver, 2007). The type of knowledge which has been associated to arise from unmediated and informal settings of learning is tacit knowledge (Nash & Collins, 2006; Polanyi, 1966).

Embedded within a psychological research paradigm, Nash and Collins (2006) drew upon Polanyi's (1966) term of tacit knowledge to explain that coaches learnt from informal and unmediated sources subconsciously. Nash and Collins (2006, p.470) defined tacit knowledge as 'the knowledge gained from everyday experience that has an implicit, unarticulated quality' and accordingly 'is often not openly expressed or stated therefore individuals must acquire such knowledge through their own experiences'. Once more however, the concept of tacit knowledge and the precise nature of 'experience' which Nash and Collins (2006) refer to has not been fully conceptualised regarding the underlying social processes which contribute to coach development.

Trudel and Gilbert (2006), along with Lemyre, Trudel and Durand-Bush (2007), deemed part of the knowledge coaches acquired within un-mediated learning situations was the subculture of a sport. Thereby these authors referred to the significance of socialisation processes and cultural learning. This line has been advanced further by many scholars having argued that coach learning is socially constructed (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2016; Christensen, 2013; Cushion & Jones, 2001; Jones, 2007; Lee & Price, 2016; Mallett, Rossi, Rynne & Rabjohns, 2016; Nelson, Groom & Potrac, 2016; Rossi, Rynne & Tinning, 2016; Rynne, Mallett & Tinning, 2006, 2010; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014). Cushion and colleagues (2003, p.217) have attended to this line of inquiry after having outlined how during a competitive athletic tenure, athletes can become accustomed to coaching practices which are 'steeped in culture' and that direct participation can provide athletes with an 'apprenticeship of observation' to internalise coaching practices. In this regard, a competitive-athletic career can be considered as an informal learning environment for acquiring coaching knowledge that is incidental, unguided, unstructured and a derivative of another activity (Christensen,

2013, Erickson et al., 2008; Lemyre et al., 2007; Mallett et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 2006). In other words, athletes can acquire on their own accord coaching knowledge as a by-product of their athletic careers which then serves as a form of experience or even an apprenticeship of coaching (Cushion et al., 2003; Jones, et al., 2003). It has been suggested, therefore, that athletic experience significantly contributes to the informal, field-specific and embodied development of sport-specific coaching knowledge (Cushion et al., 2003; Irwin et al., 2004; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003; Mallett et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 2006).

Yet some empirical research has suggested that embodied learning does not necessarily lead to an improvement of coaches' performances for attaining successful on-field results. Whilst operating within a positivist research paradigm, Schempp, McCullick, Grant, Foo and Wieser (2010) sampled 134 head coaches' on-field team success of matches won within the MLB, NBA and the NFL to determine whether there was a statistical relationship between head coaches' on-field success of results and their own professional playing experiences. It was reported here that there was no significant statistical relationship of head coaches with a professional playing background against those without one. Schempp and colleagues (2010, p.79) concluded that 'the relationship between professional playing experience and professional coaching success warrants more investigation and would be, perhaps, best served through the use of other research paradigms and by seeking added sources of data'. Therefore, the next section outlines the research paradigms within which research on sports coaching pathways and coach development has conducted its analyses in order to further establish a robust justification for the research problem and the subsequent study design of the first iteration.

### 3.1.3 Paradigms of enquiry for coach development

Although some studies have conceptually illuminated how high-performance and recreational coaches learn (Cushion et al., 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004; Jones et al., 2003; Lemyre et al., 2007; Mesquita et al., 2014; Nelson et al., 2006; Wright et al., 2007), the prominent exploratory nature of these studies has made most conclusions drawn by them to be broad and descriptive. To substantiate this claim, an example has been taken from Saury and Durand's (1998, p.265) conclusions after investigating the practical knowledge of Olympic sailing coaches and which depicted the field's lack of specificity: 'Expertise is largely based on experience. However, while not all experienced coaches are experts, all expert coaches are experienced which is consistent with theories of expertise'.

Like other studies on coach learning, education and development (e.g. Wang & Straub, 2012), Saury and Durand's (1998) work derives from cognitive behavioural analyses that have focussed on expertise coaching performance. Empirical analysis concerning the exact nature of coaches' 'experiences' which lead up to the attainment of expertise has also been limited (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2016). This is because of the aforementioned issue that many studies which have analysed coach development have primarily analysed the experiences of coaches within the formal learning contexts of NGB's coaching qualifications (e.g. Chesterfield et al., 2010; Vargas-Tonsing, 2007; *inter alia*). By building upon the work of others (Christensen, 2014; Cronin & Armour, 2015a, 2015b; De Martin-Silva, Fonseca, Jones, Morgan & Mesquita, 2015; Jones, 2009; Nelson et al., 2013; Turner, Nelson & Potrac, 2012), it is contended here that such studies have thus overlooked coaches' individual experiences for learning and development which extend into other aspects of their experiences within their lifeworlds. Therefore, in a coach learning and development context, scholarly work has been considered to have provided impersonal and limited insight into what exactly 'experience' is and how coaches as active social agents use these 'experiences' for the benefit of their own coach development (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2016; Cushion et al.,

2010).

Contributing to the limitation of existing research on coach development is the issue that because a significant proportion of research has been embedded within positivist paradigms, by account of their psychological disciplinary nature, the socio-cultural aspect of coach learning within informal learning situations has received limited conceptualisation hitherto (Cushion et al., 2010; Deek, Werthner, Paquette & Culver, 2013; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2015). Importantly, the interplay between agency and structure, and how this interplay shapes coach learning and the development of coaches' career pathways has not been fully addressed (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2016; Jones, 2007). This claim is made despite literature having identified social structures as significant influences on individual coach development (Cushion & Jones, 2014; Hassanin & Light, 2014; Jones, 2007; Light & Evans, 2013; Mallett et al., 2016; Rynne et al., 2006, 2010; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014; Townsend, Smith & Cushion, 2016) through the increasing recognition that coaching, and thus coach development, is part of the lifeworld (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Cronin & Armour, 2015a, 2015b; Cushion, 2007; Cushion, et al., 2003; Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014; Jones et al., 2003; Jones, Potrac, Cushion & Ronglan, 2011a; Jones, Edwards & Tuim Viotto Filho, 2016; Nelson, Allanson et al., 2013; Occhino, Mallett & Rynne, 2013; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Potrac et al., 2012).

To summarise then, the conclusion drawn by Schempp and colleagues (2010, p.79) of 'the relationship between professional playing experience and professional coaching success warrants more investigation and would be, perhaps, best served through the use of other research paradigms and by seeking added sources of data', has provided the direction for the project to be a sociologically driven one. The nature of the research problem complemented this choice as the aim was not to solely report on the occurrence of the athlete to high-performance coach 'fast-track' pathway but to understand the basic social process as to *why* this event occurred and *how* this was socially reproduced by the individual coaches

themselves but also by the structures which surrounded them.

With the body of literature on coach development having grown in attending to the socio-cultural dimensions of sports coaching, whether this is behaviours or learning (e.g. Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2002; Jones et al., 2011a; Potrac, Gilbert & Denison, 2013; Potrac, Jones & Cushion, 2007; Rossi, Rynne & Rabjohns, 2016; *inter-alia*), the theoretical frameworks and concepts of Bourdieu, Foucault and Goffman have notably been drawn upon. Therefore, these theories can act as sensitising concepts (Bowen, 2006) for empirically analysing the athlete-coach ‘fast-track’ pathway. As these theoretical frameworks have markedly contributed to the shaping of the project’s abductive research strategy and analysis, either through their critical application or critique, the next section of the theoretical sensitivity phase outlines these theoretical frameworks individually.<sup>23</sup>

## **3.2 Sociological theories associated with sports coach research**

### **3.2.1 Pierre Bourdieu**

When analysing high-performance sports coach pathways, Christensen’s (2013) study drew upon Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital to conceptualise why it was common for elite athletes to transition into post-athletic high-performance roles. On this, Christensen (2013, p.106) noted the following:

The logic behind this trend may reflect socially constructed cultural capital in the field of high-performance sports (Bourdieu, 1998a). One of the most obvious ways to obtain recognition, status and influence in the world of high-performance sports is to demonstrate results in one’s own athletic career, thus accumulating cultural capital in the objectified forms of medals, titles and ranking... Hence, at least in

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<sup>23</sup> It is acknowledged that the nature of Bourdieu, Foucault and Goffman’s theoretical frameworks are extensive with a comprehensive number of publications to each of their names. The next section therefore only provides an overview of the central concepts in each of their work by trying to note how the literature of sports coaching, and in particular the development of coaching knowledge and coaching pathways has applied their theories.

Scandinavia, it is not unusual for a world championship to lead to a coaching career.

In such a light, Bourdieu's conceptualisation of particular species of capital and how these are contested and legitimised within the field of high-performance can be (and has been) fruitful in further understanding the transition between elite athlete and high-performance coaches.

Wacquant (1993, p.1) explains that the 'common thread running through Bourdieu's enquiries is to uncover the specific contribution that symbolic forms make to the constitution and perpetuation of structured inequality by masking its economic and political moorings'. Effectively, Bourdieu's conceptual framework addresses the dialectical relationship between the actions of social agents and the manner in which social structures contour such actions. For Bourdieu, all agents operate within 'bounded social arenas' (Evans, Bright & Brown, 2015, p.744), or fields, within which agents have a degree of freedom. The pervasive nature of structural factors which agents are exposed to whilst situated within fields can also shape individual and collective actions and preserve the interests of those residing in positions of cultural and societal power (Swartz, 1998).

Bourdieu (1985, p.724) classified the social world as a 'multi-dimensional social space' constructed of multiple fields that, although relatively autonomous, coalesce intermittently with one another through the impermeable and 'delimited' nature of their boundaries (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Martin, 2003). Hence, agents are simultaneously situated within multiple fields, each with specific cultural conditions which produce social norms and expectancies, or normalising practices (Bourdieu, 1998a; Hunter 2004). Moreover, Wacquant (1992, p.17) describes how each field is 'simultaneously a space of conflict and competition', as each delimited field within the social space 'prescribes its particular values and possesses its own regulative principles'. Competitive and high-performance sport represents one such field (Bourdieu, 1993; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992;

Noble & Watkins, 2003), within which, AF and RU, for example, constitute partially autonomous and delimited fields within the broader field of professional sport<sup>24</sup> (Mallett et al., 2016; Lee & Price, 2016). Each field has its own historical norms, or ‘tastes’, which include not only the field’s explicit and formal rules and regulations, but also informal, tacit and implicit customs, ceremonies and etiquette that are collectively known as practice (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

A dynamic power structure exists within fields through which positions of power are contested (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990, 1998a). The location of power is dependent upon agents’ objective and subjective knowledge, and ability, to conduct specific forms of practice (Bourdieu, 1998a; Brown, 2005). For example, one form of practice by which dominant agents reinforce their position of power is to employ symbolic violence, the strategic legitimisation and utilisation of practices which become accepted as norms in a field, even when such practice is contrary to the interests of a group (Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014).

Agents are distributed within fields based on the overall accumulated volume and weight of capital in which they possess (Bourdieu, 1985, 1986). Yet Bourdieu (1990) recognises that all agents have the ability to employ their own strategies for contesting positions of power through embodying various species of capital in a manner which the previously cited quote from Christensen (2013) depicts (also see Purdy, Jones & Cassidy, 2009). On this point, Wacquant (1992, p.17) explained how fields resemble a ‘battlefield, in which participants vie to establish monopoly over the species of capital effective in it’.

Whilst moving away from what he perhaps perceived as Karl Marx’s economic and structural reductionism, Bourdieu (1986) conceptualised several more species of capital

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<sup>24</sup> The recognition of AF and RU as partially autonomous delimited fields is of significance when investigating the elite athlete to high-performance coach pathway and is analysed in greater detail within section 4.4.

which agents can accumulate in addition to economic capital. These were social, cultural and symbolic capital. All species of capital can be exhibited in three states: embodied, institutionalised or objectified (Bourdieu, 1986). Social capital is related to the affiliations or obligations of an individual and is represented in an institutionalised state (see Kay & Bradbury, 2009). Cultural capital is exhibited by ‘tastes’ of consumption (Moore, 2004) and manifests itself in the embodied, institutionalised and objectified states (Bourdieu, 1986). Embodied cultural capital is represented by ‘long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body’ (Bourdieu, 1986, p.47) that are accumulated both consciously and subconsciously through socialisation to culture and tradition (Brown, 2005; Lake, 2011; Light & Evans, 2013). Institutionalised cultural capital manifests itself in the forms of educational qualifications, whereas objectified cultural capital is presented in the form of cultural goods (Robbins, 1999). As Christensen (2013) reported within the field of high-performance sport, elite athletes can possess objectified cultural capital in the form of winning medals or titles and attaining high ranking positions, all of which can be seen as enabling athletes to exhibit their credible potential to transition into a post-athletic high-performance coaching career. Encompassed within cultural capital is physical capital (Shilling, 1993), relating to the health, fitness and aesthetics of the culturally produced and corporeal body of actors (Evans et al., 2015). Finally, symbolic capital consists of ‘esteem, recognition, belief, credit, confidence of others’ (Bourdieu 2000, p.164) and is the accumulation of agents possessing all other species of capital which can then be converted into symbolic capital for securing agents’ positions of social standing within the social space.

Over time, contestation of capital through repeated social practice within fields leads to internalisation of legitimate behaviours and norms which Bourdieu (1990, p.52) conceptualised as the *habitus*, a ‘system of structured, structuring dispositions which is constituted in practice and is always orientated towards practical functions’. This internalisation of norms occurs at the level of the subconscious, or ‘second nature’, often in



a manner which reinforces the very structures that limit individuals in the first place (Bourdieu, 1990). Repeated exposure to the dominant practices of the field produces and reproduces embodied knowledge and capabilities, resulting in the habitus becoming embodied as deportment (Barker & Bailey, 2015; Brown, 2005; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Hassanin & Light, 2015; Light & Kirk, 2000). Indeed, as has previously been cited within the overview of literature (section 3.1.2), Cushion and colleagues (2003, p.223) have explained how past socialisation within the field of sport significantly contributed to high-level youth coaches' behaviours and coaching practices which were 'often the expression of tacit beliefs that are so taken for granted that they cannot be recognised or verbalised'. These beliefs take the form of habitus (Claringbould, Knoppers & Jacobs, 2015; Light & Evans, 2013; Light, Evans, Harvey & Hassanin, 2015).

The process of the embodiment of the habitus is referred to as *hexis* (Williams, 1995). As will be discussed in the reporting of the thesis' findings, coaches who had been socialised to the field of elite sport, and more significantly the semi-autonomous and delimited field of each club as competitive-athletes, were considered by club directors to have subconsciously and consciously embodied the habitus associated to the field of high-performance AF and RU. As will be shown in the reporting of the first iteration's results in particular, the senior directors highly valued their athletes' practices of *hexis* for embodying the club's values. In addition to this, Bourdieu (1990, p.68) signifies the 'immediate adherence' to the apparently logical 'most precious values' of each field is conceptualised as *doxa*, or the 'unthinking nature of practice' that is rarely challenged except through reflexive action.

Bourdieu described the habitus as not being deterministic however, as it also encapsulates the creative possibilities of individual actions which enable resistance and transformation of normalising practices. The relationship between agents and structures in Bourdieu's framework is, therefore, dialectical as the agency-structure dichotomy intersects at the subconscious level of the habitus (Hunter, 2004). Hence, agents are dialectically

influenced by the structural conditions of the field they practice within, whilst at the same time, agents have the opportunity of changing the habitus and doxa of the field (Bourdieu, 1984). The extent to which individuals engage in reflexive practices, whether consciously or unconsciously has been conceptualised as the *illusio* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Evans et al., 2015; Garrigou, 2006; Hunter 2004).

Although the first iteration's data revealed the value of Bourdieu's concepts, the second iteration's data unearthed several limitations of Bourdieu's framework. Following the second iteration, section 5.6 of the thesis is presented as a theoretical memo and signifies how Bourdieu's account of agency habitus development was overly deterministic. Therefore, a continual re-reading of the data identified the value of Michel Foucault's theoretical framework to explain the social process behind the 'fast-track' career trajectory of elite athletes' transition into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles. An overview of Foucault's theoretical framework and the studies which have applied his concepts is now presented.

### **3.2.2 Michel Foucault**

Although research in the sociology of sport has comprehensively drawn upon Foucault, the application of his work to conceptualise phenomena surrounding sports coaching practices and coach developmental pathways is only an embryonic area at present (Denison, 2011). Foucault's work has largely been applied on a number of other sporting topics, which include, but are not restricted to: athletes' self-discipline towards training (Johns & Johns, 2000; Jones, Glintmeyer & McKenzie, 2005; Lang, 2010; Markula, 2003; McMahon & Penney, 2013; McMahon, Penney & Dinan-Thompson, 2012; Shogan, 1999); athlete-coach sexual relationships (Johansson & Larsson, 2016); representations of sporting

masculinity (Pringle, 2005; Pringle & Hickey, 2007; Pringle & Markula, 2005) and femininity (Barker-Ruchti & Tinning, 2010; Mackay & Dallaire, 2013; McGannon, 2012; Thorpe, 2008; *inter-alia*). What connects these topics, and was a central focus of Foucault's work, was the theorisation of social control along with the subjective, corporeal existence of the self and body (Andrews, 1993; Evans & Allen-Collinson, 2016; Evans, Allen-Collinson & Williams, 2016). The body for Foucault (1979, 1980, 2003) acted as a site capable of holding and exhibiting power and knowledge (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Although individuals had the capacity to transform or alter their bodies, views on bodily ideals are created and inscribed by discourse (Azzarito, 2009; Lang, 2010; McGannon, 2012).

The notion of discourse represents how cultural values, rituals and knowledge are constructed as 'truths' (Foucault, 1980). Discourse then becomes normalised, taken-for-granted assumptions and products of genealogy that are implicitly connected to historical conditions which can go unchallenged (Andrews, 1993; Cushion, 2016; Foucault, 1980; Pringle, 2005). Although discourse can initially be seen as similar to ideology, Foucault (1980, 2003) averred discourse to signify the socially produced and reproduced unwritten rules of societal practices (Denison, 2010) that have both constraining and productive capabilities. Ideology on the other hand signalled the class based repressive values and beliefs imposed onto society by the bourgeoisie (Foucault, 1980). Nonetheless, there is an almost hidden agenda to the formation of discourses. Denison (2010, p.464) identified, within his analysis of how middle- and long- distance running coaches formed their knowledge for planning coaching practices, that these discourses are created through an historical social milieu which are 'enmeshed within relations of power'. Similar findings have been found within the current thesis. These are reported upon within the second iteration (sections 5.4-5.6) concerning how academy directors specifically promoted certain coaching practices and knowledge in order for incoming academy coaches to reproduce the club's discourse, otherwise referred to as 'coaching philosophy'.

It was not the objective of Foucault to identify discourses but instead it was to seek out the mechanisms behind their production (Darnell, 2007). Such mechanisms were labelled as ‘regimes’ (Foucault, 1980). The strategies which various regimes employed to perpetuate discourses were seen by Foucault (1980) to not be explicit and coercive but more discreet and discursive. Regimes producing discourses were thus conceptualised as ‘regimes of truth’ (Foucault, 1980; Gore, 1993).

Foucault applied the term ‘genealogy’ to denote how he approached his analysis through a socio-historical lens.<sup>25</sup> Foucault also applied the term ‘archaeology’ (i.e. his 1989 text *The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences*) to represent how the body was considered an object of knowledge; created by the self yet accountable to and influenced by social structure (Andrews, 1993; Markula & Pringle, 2006). Social structure manifested itself as an ‘intricate web of power relations’ (Denison, 2011, p.28). Yet by further opposing Marxist thinking, Foucault (1983, 2003) emphasised that structures were not deterministic. Consequently, Foucault (1979, 1983) re-theorised power as relational: a two-way process of enablement and constraint liable to a variety of forces in that agency actions shaped social structures, but at the same time, social structure guided and directed agency action (Faubion, 1998).

Building upon this re-theorisation, after conducting his analysis of prison systems in his 1979 text *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*, Foucault signified power to exist in capillary forms in an omnipresent fashion. This conception of power opposed the view of structuralist theories, of which Foucault was critical and went on to say: ‘I don’t see who could be more of an anti-structuralist than myself’ (Foucault, 1980, p.114). Moreover, power was argued by Foucault (1980, p.119) to not only be repressive but also enabling and

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<sup>25</sup> Foucault (1980, p.117) detailed genealogy to be an attempt to situate events or subjects ‘within a historical framework’ that strove to recognise the ‘constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc. without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history’.

facilitating: power ‘produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse’ and it should therefore ‘be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression’.

To highlight this re-theorisation of power, concerning how both agency and structure was dialectical in its relationship with one and another, Foucault argued how individuals operated within two terrains: the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. The outside terrain noted the structures of organisations, the state and governments that coercively and anonymously exercised power in an external and disciplinary manner. The inside terrain depicted how agents subjectively interpreted their own identity in either conforming or contesting disciplinary power (Deleuze, 1999/1986; Jagodzinski, 2008; Jones & Denison, 2016). The process of which agents created and ‘folded’ their own identities in relation to the inside and outside terrains was another central aspect of Foucault’s work. This process was one which Foucault conceptualised as subjectivation (Deleuze, 1999/1986; Jacobs, Claringbould & Knoppers, 2016; Markula & Pringle, 2006). Indeed, the notion of subjectivation has been a prominent theme that emerged from the thesis’ data. Iteration three (section 6.4) reports on the difficulties some of the ‘fast-tracked’ and novice coaches encountered when attempting to ‘fold’ their identities from that of an elite athlete to a high-performance coach whilst balancing their own desires against the discourses and regimes of truth which they as aspiring coaches were accountable to.

Associated to subjectivation is the notion of discipline which also played a central part in Foucault’s oeuvre. As part of the outside terrain, external forces, such as governments, exercised disciplinary power via technologies of power in an attempt to exert dominance and legitimise social norms. One such method of a technology of power is surveillance; a means to regulate and make bodies docile for conforming to normalising behaviours and maintain social order (Foucault, 1979). Panopticism is a form of surveillance and is most associated to the architectural structure of Jeremy Bentham’s 1843 prison (see

Foucault, 1979 and Miller, 1988). The prison consisted of a central tower which housed the prison guards. The prison inmates were interned in cells which circled the tower where the guards could observe the inmates but the inmates could not see the guards. Because the inmates were not able to determine whether or not the guards were observing them on all occasions, they policed their own behaviour (Foucault, 1988a). This meant that the prisoners were 'caught up in a power situation in which they are themselves the bearers' (Foucault, 1979, p.201). As Webb, McCaughy and MacDonald (2004, p.209) surmised, 'the architectural structure, therefore, becomes a metaphor demonstrating the powerful effects of surveillance on the regulation and self-regulation of the citizenry'. The concept of governmentality highlights this surveillance process on a macro-scale of how national governments and other institutions discursively attempt to control the behaviours of the population (Dean, 2010). As depicted by the actions of the inmates within Bentham's prison, agents can become compliant through practices of self-discipline in what Foucault (1988a) termed as 'technologies of the self' (Heikkala, 1993; Jacobs et al., 2016; Johns & Johns, 2000; Markula, 2003, 2004; Markula & Pringle, 2006).

It is on the subject of how and why coaches behave in certain ways and how specific forms of knowledge are acquired where a burgeoning number of studies have informatively conceptualised these events through applying Foucault's concepts of discipline, surveillance, docility and technologies of power and the self (e.g. Denison, 2007, 2010; Denison, Mills & Konoval, 2015; Heikkala, 1993; Jacobs et al., 2016; Manley, 2012; Manley, Palmer & Roderick, 2012; Manley, Roderick, Parker, 2016; Piggott, 2012). Specifically, sports coaching research has highlighted how in the provision of their coach education programmes, NGBs (Piggott, 2012) and government policy designed to professionalise sports coaching (Garratt et al., 2013; Piper, Garratt & Taylor, 2013; Piper, Taylor & Garratt, 2012; Taylor & Garratt, 2010) reprise as a technology of power in regulating the type of knowledge coaches can access and then act upon. The value of

acquiring specific knowledge was seen by Foucault (1978/1976, 1980) to enable individuals to attain power (power/knowledge) by commanding authority on what knowledge was valued (Piggott, 2012). In such a light, and as will be shown in the project's second iteration in particular, the data represented how Foucault's theoretical framework conceptualised the social processes for how and why elite athletes are 'fast-tracked' into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles. The third iteration exposes how individual coaches negotiated these power balances by either becoming docile to structural coaching discourses (i.e. coaching philosophies) or by contesting them. Research that has attempted to expose similar processes whereby coaches negotiate power balances and legitimise their roles has drawn upon the work of Erving Goffman. The next section now overviews this body of work and Goffman's theoretical framework.

### **3.2.3 Erving Goffman<sup>26</sup>**

Erving Goffman's sociological theory has increasingly become an influential analytical tool in the field of sports coaching and hence cannot be ignored at this point of the thesis. The prominence of his work in the field of sports research overall has not always been such a cornerstone. A reason why the application of his theoretical framework has taken time to be significantly utilised during the latter parts of the twentieth century is that Goffman's methodologies were subjected to widespread early criticism on the basis that they were 'unsystematic and unconventional' (Birrell & Donnelly, 2004, p.55). These criticisms centred on Goffman's preference to conduct observational and early forms of ethnographic

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<sup>26</sup> The data of each iteration did not reveal the value or applicability of Goffman's conceptual framework. Instead, the data opposed Goffman's concepts, particularly within iteration three. Therefore, a critique of Goffman's work is applied towards the culmination of the thesis when constructing a GT and therefore does not appear any sooner. The extent to which literature has applied Goffman's concepts is a reason for including an overview of his work at this stage of the thesis. Overviewing his work at this point of the thesis, however, helped identify a theoretical sample for the first iteration.

research (Burns, 1992). The fact that Herbert Blumer and Anselm Strauss acted as Goffman's thesis supervisors indicates why many other scholars of that era embedded within the dominating positivist and objectivist research paradigms opposed his methodologies (Birrell & Donnelly, 2004).

The increasing amount of studies making the shift from positivism to interpretivism since the turn of the twenty-first century, none-more so than within the field of sports social sciences, has resulted in Goffman's earlier work being utilised to frame a significant amount of scholarly analyses (Birrell & Donnelly, 2004). In particular, Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model which he outlined in his text '*The presentation of the self in everyday life*' has been an important analytical framework for sports coaching research (e.g. Chesterfield et al., 2010; Consterdine, Newton & Piggin, 2013; Jones 2006; Jones et al., 2011b; Partington & Cushion, 2012; Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002; Potrac et al., 2007; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b). Prior to completing an overview of the literature which has applied Goffman's work in sports coaching research, however, an overview of his central concepts is now delivered.

In his body of work, Goffman centred his analysis on what has been termed as 'micro-sociology', the everyday encounters and actions of social actors which many of his peers and predecessors took for granted (Birrell & Donnelly, 2004; Burns, 1992). Principally, his work analysed the microscopic forms of interactions and communication encompassed within direct earshot or sight of one and another throughout the conduct of agents' daily lives<sup>27</sup> (Burns, 1992; Smith, 2006). For Goffman (1967), daily encounters were ritual interactions. Interactions were subsumed by social agents negotiating an information game whereby impressions were conveyed to others in two forms: 'expressions given and

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<sup>27</sup> The directness, or 'co-presence' (Goffman, 1967) of face-to-face encounters between agents was Goffman's initial focus of analysis and encompassed, *inter-alia*, theatrical performances, public meetings, buying and selling along with sexual encounters in bed (Burns, 1992). Goffman's (1981) later text of '*Forms of talk*' began to consider communication and encounters via technologies such as radio and television where agents were not directly 'co-present'.



expressions given off' (Goffman, 1959, p.16). Individuals were considered to engineer how they presented themselves in what Goffman (1959, 1969) termed as a front or façade by calculated means that are both conscious (intentional) and subconscious (unintentional), all for the purposes of promoting positive social values (Goffman, 1967). Communication was judged to be verbal and non-verbal cues, otherwise referred to by Goffman (1959) as lines. Costume and appearance also contributed to the lines agents presented. The exchange of communication strategies was seen as a performance that influenced the impression an individual made. All performances were based on the intention to sustain credibility, avoid embarrassment or stigma (Goffman, 1963) and maintain a position within society. In a sports coaching context, such performances have been interpreted as coaches intending to retain power as a coach (Consterdine et al., 2013; Partington & Cushion, 2012; Potrac et al., 2002, 2007).

To further define these acts, Goffman (1967, 1969) proposed the concept of face-work to note how societal rules of etiquette and tact define what types of interactions society positively approved. In a coach development capacity, the work of Chesterfield and colleagues (2010) reported how six AF coaches attending a formal coach education course engaged in impression management strategies to portray to the course tutors an agreement of the course content for the purposes of attaining accreditation. Upon successful completion of the course, when the candidates returned to their own usual coaching environment, they then reverted to practice in 'their tried and trusted methods of player development' which in many cases opposed the course content (*ibid*, p.310). These two modes of strategic interaction have been conceptualised as front stage and back stage by Goffman (1959): front stage in the immediate presence of an audience (the tutors in this case) and back stage away from the audience.

Goffman's dramaturgical model has also been applied in analyses of in-situ coaching behaviours. One example is Partington and Cushion's (2012) mixed methods analysis of 12

youth AF coaches' in-game behaviours. The authors revealed how the coaches consciously performed during their interactions with the players so that they conformed to the expectations of the audience (parents, players and other coaches) of how a coach *should* act in order to safeguard their continued employment. The authors (*ibid*, p.101) concluded that 'Goffman's (1969) notion of strategic interaction forms a key part of coaches' socialisation into given roles while also impacting the microstructure of day-to-day practice'. It is on this point where Goffman's framework recognised the agency-structure dichotomy; agency interactions were underpinned, interconnected and typical of the social structures of society (Burns, 1992; Goffman, 1969). Goffman's focus on the encounters and actions of individuals was because he considered this as an 'attribute of social order, of society, not as an attribute of individual persons' (Burns, 1992, p.23).

Studies of coaches' behaviours have shed light on the agency-structure dichotomy and have therefore further enforced the notion that sports coaching and the development of coaches is a 'highly negotiated and contested activity' (Chesterfield et al., 2010, p.310). For example, when analysing the micropolitical context of a semi-professional AF club within the UK, Potrac and Jones (2009a) reported how one coach negotiated internal conflict with a number of the club's stakeholders in order to legitimise and foster his power for attaining successful performances. The authors recorded how the coach applied a number of impression management strategies individually and collectively with the players. Concerning collective impression management, Goffman's (1959) notion of a performance team was highlighted within Potrac and Jones' (2009a) study as the coach recruited certain players who would support his coaching methods. In this regard, the interactions of the individual are disseminated to others across the social structure (the club in this case). The cooperation of these agents was coined by Goffman as dramaturgical discipline and dramaturgical loyalty, with which, then adds weight to the legitimisation of practices and the power of individuals. Dramaturgical discipline notes how agents discipline their own actions

and impression management strategies to cohere with the rest of the groups' strategies whereas dramaturgical loyalty highlights a 'moral obligation' to the team (*ibid*, p.571).

### **3.2.4 Theoretical sensitivity summary**

Although Goffman's theoretical framework has been successfully applied to a range of sports coaching phenomena, the data of the present thesis opposed Goffman's concepts. Iteration three exposes the social processes behind how the 'fast-tracked' coaches negotiated and then consolidated their coaching identities from their previous athletic identities. In so doing, the theme of 'honesty' and 'staying true to their selves' became a central concern as to whether they would make the transition from elite athlete to high-performance coach a successful one or not. In such a light, the resultant GT critiques Goffman's concepts and extends the field's understanding on the relevancy to which Bourdieu and Foucault's concepts explain the social processes for the 'fast-tracked' transition between elite athlete and high-performance coaching within men's AF and RU.

For example, when questioning senior club directors on why they appointed 'fast-tracked' head coaches, iteration one revealed the importance the senior directors placed on the embodiment of 'their clubs' values for head coaches to quickly gain the 'respect' of the club's players. The significance of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and hexis for this social process were prominent. Within iteration two, however, when academy directors were asked why they appointed 'fast-tracked' coaches within the academy context, the objectivist and determinist nature of Bourdieu's theoretical framework was also revealed. Therefore, Foucault's concepts of docile bodies, surveillance and technologies of power and the self were more appropriate to theoretically explain the social processes on what coach knowledge and skills were promoted over others. In so doing, the thesis' GT represents a new insight

into how coaching knowledge is attained by elite athletes and how the transition to a post-athletic high-performance coaching role is culturally negotiated. It also extends our understanding on the relevance of Bourdieu, Foucault and Goffman's theoretical frameworks for this substantive context.

To conclude this theoretical sensitivity phase, it has been shown that the development of sports coaches' knowledge and learning the skills of a coach is heavily accountable to culture. The processes of negotiating social structures in either attaining a coaching role or sustaining one is also evident (Jones, 2006; Potrac et al., 2002, 2007). The above literature and social theories therefore informed the direction of empirical data collection in regards to the populations that have been sampled and by which means. Before proceeding onto outlining these, final clarification of the research problem is presented in the following section whilst noting the justification for conducting the research.

### **3.3 The research problem**

Combining my own experiences within sport with all of the overviewed literature, the primary aim of the project was to qualitatively investigate the social processes of how and why elite athletes negotiated a 'fast-track' transition into a post-athletic high-performance coaching role. Indeed, the quantitative studies authored by Schempp et al. (2010) and Mielke (2007) have outlined the pathway between elite athlete and high-performance coach to be prevalent in the NBA, MLB and EPL in particular. Such findings have further reinforced Werthner and Trudel's (2009) assertion of the pathway from elite athlete to high-performance coach to be 'idiosyncratic' and that the prospect of becoming a head coach within AF had become the 'exclusive preserve of former players' (Kelly, 2008, p.410). Combined, these assertions have been considered to add weight for investigating this

particular phenomenon.

A significant proportion of studies drawn upon thus far have been based in North America (Carter & Bloom, 2009; Erickson et al., 2007; Mielke, 2007; Salmela, 1995; Schempp et al., 2010; Schinke et al., 1995; Werthner & Trudel, 2009) or Australia (Mallett et al., 2016; Occhino et al., 2013; Rossi et al., 2016; Rynne, 2014; Rynne & Mallett, 2012; Rynne et al., 2006, 2010). The sports under analysis have largely been sports most popular and associated with North America (NFL, MLB and NBA - Mielke [2007] also included the EPL). With the project based in England, it was considered pragmatically unfeasible to select popular North American sports for investigation. Yet the selection of AF and RU were viewed as realistic and relevant sports to investigate this phenomenon.

The phenomenon of elite athletes who transitioned into high-performance coaching roles within these sports has been found to be prevalent. Examining the biographies of head coaches<sup>28</sup> in post at professional RU clubs in England at the beginning of the 2013/14 season, and then cross referencing these biographies to the coaches' union website records, showed 20 head coaches of the 22 men's professional RU teams in England had previous experience as professional RU athletes. Repeating the same process for AF head coaches in England and Wales for the same season, showed that 90 head coaches of the 92 men's professional football league teams had professional playing experience in AF. The combination of these statistics and the findings of literature within AF (Kelly, 2008; Mielke, 2007) has been deemed to provide further justification for RU and AF as sites for investigating the phenomenon of competitive-athletes who transition into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The titles of head coach, manager and director of rugby are interchangeably used across AF and RU. Although these roles are not entirely homogenous, for clarity, the term 'head coach' has been applied here with the intention to represent the individual principally responsible for improving the performances and ranking of each club's first team playing squad.

<sup>29</sup> RU was included in conjunction with AF because of the aforementioned pathway which Martin Johnson took between retiring from a competitive athletic career and attaining his first coaching role as England men's

It must be noted at this point that women's sport was discounted. This was because at the time of the project's inception, the 'fast-track' pathway between elite athlete and high-performance coach was not prevalent in the two women's sports. The phenomena had not been identified as an event which frequently occurred by the media, nor had it been reported by the literature at the time of the project's inception.<sup>30</sup> Because the theoretical sensitivity phase had not identified masculine ideologies to have been a significant issue within formalised coaching qualifications and high-performance coach pathways, this thesis has not focussed directly on this topic. Recommendations for future research to consider the impact of masculine ideologies within men and women's coach development have been made in the '*future research recommendations*' section (section 8.4).

Men's and women's rugby league was also discounted for inclusion because of the lack of individuals who were recorded to have had negotiated this specific career transition and pathway. Consequently, the project was specifically designed to investigate the population of elite male AF and RU athletes who transfer into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles within the UK soon after retiring from an elite competitive-athletic career. The research problem was specified furthermore:

- To understand the social processes for the 'fast-track' transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach in men's association football and rugby union.

Although the research problem had evolved into one which was more specified<sup>31</sup>, its broad nature was at this time seen to be a fertile starting point for the project to commence

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national team head coach (section 1.2).

<sup>30</sup> Readers are encouraged to refer to Barker-Ruchti, Lindgren, Hofmann, Sinning and Shelton (2014) for a focussed analysis on women's coaching career pathways. Further analysis on the difficulties women encounter for entering into a coaching career have also been explored in a number of studies (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2011; LaVoi & Dutove, 2012; Lewis, Roberts & Andrews, 2015; Norman, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2015; Schlesinger & Weigelt-Schlesinger, 2012; Stangl, 2013; Vinson, Christian, Jones, Williams & Peters, 2016) that have all highlighted the gendered inequality for their provision of women's coach education structures along with the masculine ideologies that are reproduced within them.

<sup>31</sup> For a condensed visual representation of the development of the research statement please refer back to table 1 (p.xii).

inquiry with via a Straussian GTM. The problem in this format was determined as one which would provide the project with initial direction (Suddaby, 2006) but also enable the research to have ‘flexibility and freedom to explore the phenomena in depth’ (Backman & Kyngäs, 1999, p.149) for uncovering rich explanatory results through the process of refining more specific sub-research questions in later iterations (Agee, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Maxwell, 2013).

Forthcoming procedural or sub-research questions (Creswell, 2013) were intended to direct the project in producing new empirical knowledge that was rich and focussed, whilst at the same time still addressing the overarching research problem in order to develop a GT. Indeed, Agee (2009, p.435) further explains how provisional research statements (or research problems as it is with the current project) can be adequately used as replacements for research questions on the premise that statements/problems can ‘better guide data collection’. In conjunction with Corbin and Strauss (2015), Maxwell (2013) also advocated the initial use of broad research statements/problems on the basis that specific questions could narrow a researcher’s analysis and inhibit overall understanding of the phenomena.

Nonetheless, preliminary research statements/problems still require sufficient structure in order to have purpose and enough clarity to direct the project’s line of inquiry by serving as ‘boundaries without unduly constraining’ the project (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p.75). Moreover, Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggested research questions/problems are required to be constructed in such a manner that would entail the research project to meet the purposes of addressing either exploratory, explanatory, descriptive and emancipatory goals. Structuring the research problem as *‘to understand the social processes for the ‘fast-track’ transition from elite athlete to elite coach in men’s association football and rugby union’* meant that the patterns and plausible relationships related to the basic social processes of the phenomena of structure and agency could be explained (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

### 3.4 The value of the research

As has already been highlighted, Werthner and Trudel (2009) noted how the pathway between elite athlete and high-performance coach was now considered to be an ‘idiosyncratic pathway’. Yet the results of the aforementioned studies (Mielke, 2007; Schempp et al., 2010) have reported this specific career trajectory to be prominent in a number of sports without any full conceptual analysis having been undertaken to explain why. It is on this point whereby Barker-Ruchti et al. (2016, p.6) have recently (and as previously cited – section 2.1) proposed two foci for researchers to consider: 1) ‘how do individuals become high-performance coaches?’ and; 2) ‘how does cultural context influence learning, and how can coaches and athletes exert influence on their contexts to increase intentional learning?’ Therefore, the project’s overarching research problem was one which met these two foci and could extend the field’s understanding on high-performance coach development and learning. Moreover, the career pathway from elite athlete to high-performance coach has indeed been recorded to have been shortened through Rynne’s (2014, p.311) account of a ‘fast-tracked’ pathway to be a ‘relatively new phenomena but is widespread in international sport’.

Indeed, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) has sanctioned its support of a ‘fast-track’ pathway for elite AF athletes to circumvent entry level qualifications when registering onto higher coaching qualifications. Within UEFA’s latest Coaching Convention policy (UEFA, 2015, p.22) it stipulates that national governing bodies, such as the Football Association (FA) and additional member bodies like the Professional Footballers’ Association (PFA) can ‘organise a specific course for integrating the content of a UEFA B diploma course with that of a UEFA A diploma course for long-serving players’. In this case, the entry level coaching qualifications which elite athletes do not require are



levels one and two.<sup>32</sup> It continues to define long-serving players who are eligible for these courses to be ‘a player who has played at least 7 full years as a professional in the top division of a FIFA or UEFA member association’ (*ibid*, p.22). Similarly, the Rugby Football Union (RFU) have organised and delivered level three coach education courses solely for the purposes of ‘senior professional players’ to register onto without having acquired the entry-level qualifications of either a level one or two coaching qualification.<sup>33</sup> Essentially therefore, the organisations who afford elite or former elite athletes the concessions to expedite the attainment of formal coaching qualifications consider a competitive-athletic career to be the equivalent of level one and two coaching qualifications.

The impact which a competitive-athletic career has on the formation and development of coaching knowledge is not fully understood at present (Cushion et al., 2010). Therein the concessions made by sports governing bodies to ‘fast-track’ elite athletes through formal qualifications can currently be considered to lack a robust theoretical basis. Findings derived from the present project would therefore contribute to the field’s understanding on high-performance coaches’ development who possess a competitive-athletic background. The results can inform key stakeholders such as UEFA, the FA, PFA, RFU, and other sports NGBs who also support or accommodate the ‘fast-tracking’ of elite athletes through their coach education structures on the value of allowing this.

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<sup>32</sup> See figure five (p.77) for a visual representation of how the FA’s coach education course structure integrates into the UEFA coach pathway.

<sup>33</sup> See figure six (p.77) for a visual representation of the RFU’s coach education structure.

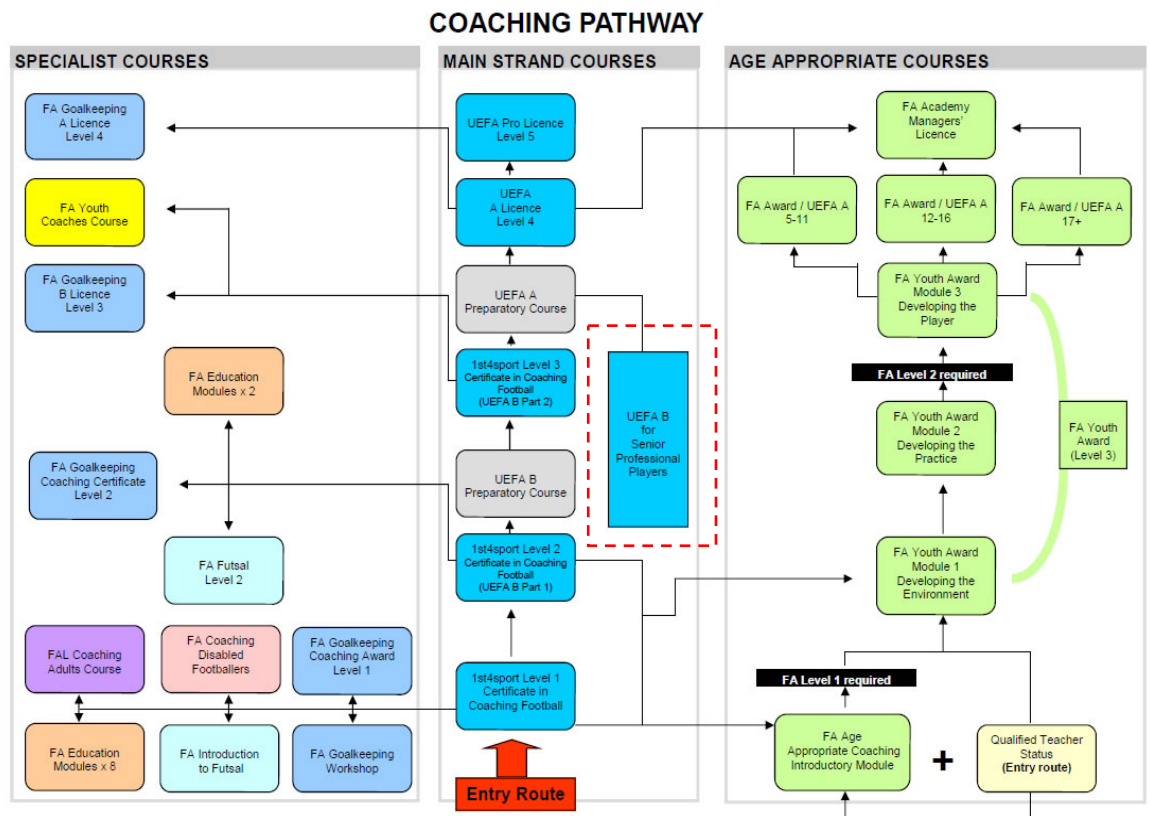


Figure 5 FA coaching pathway (FA, 2014)

## COACHING STRUCTURE

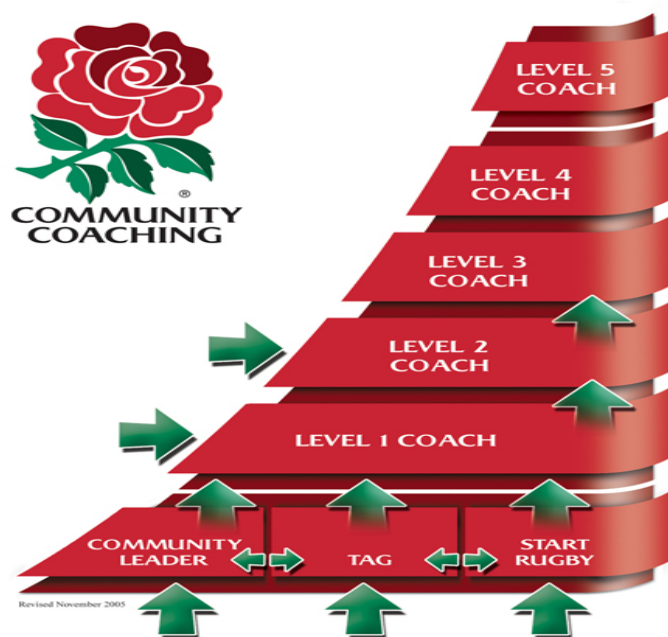


Figure 6 RFU coach pathway (RFU, 2005)

## **Chapter 4 - Iteration 1: Senior directors**

### **4.1 Theoretical sample**

From the outset of the project, the theoretical sample phase had been intended to provide a bridge between the theoretical sensitivity chapter and the first iteration of empirical data collection. Therein the purpose of this theoretical sample chapter is twofold: firstly, to formulate sub-research questions, and secondly, to theoretically justify why the sample of senior club directors of elite AF and RU clubs was identified. In so doing, this theoretical sample chapter also takes the form of an introduction for the first iteration as it analytically identifies and justifies the methods of data collection for which the first empirical iteration proceeded with.<sup>34</sup> The chapter commences with an explanation for how the sub-research questions were formed.

#### **4.1.1 Forming sub-research questions**

An emerging concept derived from the theoretical sensitivity phase was the career trajectory of elite athletes who transitioned into a post-athletic coaching role which seemed to be associated with the presumption that elite athletes were socialised to the role of coaching through their competitive-athletic playing careers. As an athlete, an apprenticeship of coaching (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Cushion et al., 2003) was also considered within the theoretical sensitivity phase as grounding the formation and acquisition of expertise coaching knowledge. The conclusions of studies on coach education and development have mirrored such assertions of the seemingly direct relationship between an elite athletic background and the formation of expertise coaching knowledge (Christensen, 2013; De

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<sup>34</sup> See figure one (p.xii) for an illustrative account of the thesis structure.

Marco & McCullick, 1997; Werthner & Trudel, 2009; *inter-alia*). To reaffirm then, because of this seemingly direct relationship, playing experience, it has been suggested, significantly contributes to the informal, field-specific and embodied development of sport-specific expertise coaching knowledge (Cushion et al., 2003; Irwin et al., 2004; Jones et al., 2003; Mallett et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 2006). Once again however, further conceptual analysis has not been undertaken of how competitive-athletic careers inform individuals of coaching knowledge, or, how expertise coaching is manifested. On this basis, two sub-research questions were constructed to direct the first iteration when sampling senior directors of elite AF and RU clubs:

- Why are elite athletes seen as suitable candidates to be ‘fast-tracked’ into high-performance coaching post-athletic roles?
- How and what type of coaching knowledge was acquired during a competitive-athletic career?

The following section provides a more critical appraisal on how the literature has attempted to analyse expertise coaching, and, in turn, provides a theoretical justification for the methods and sample that were selected to answer these sub-research questions (Giles et al., 2013).

#### **4.1.2 Rationale of method and design**

As has already been claimed, research on the development of sports coaches has predominantly focused on qualitatively analysing the impact of NGB coach education programmes from the perspective of the coaches themselves (e.g. Cassidy et al., 2006; Chesterfield et al., 2010; Mallett et al., 2009; Nelson, Cushion & Potrac, 2013; Mesquita, et

al., 2014). Further studies have attempted to draw out the constructs of developing expertise coaching and in doing so have directly sampled coaches to address the issue (Becker & Wrisberg, 2008; Carter & Bloom, 2009; Nash & Sproule, 2009; Potrac et al., 2002; Piggott, 2012; Mesquita, et al., 2014; Sherwin et al., 2017; Werthner & Trudel, 2009; Young, Jemczyk, Brophy & Côté, 2009). The preferred method of data collection for these studies has been the semi-structured open-ended interview as they have been considered to best allow coaches to elaborate and provide a more detailed explanation of issues associated with their development (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Patton, 2015).

Support of semi-structured open-ended interviews within the literature on coach development has notably been made through reference to Guba and Lincoln's (1981) text. For example, Bloom and Salmela (2000, p.61) cite how Guba and Lincoln assert such a method can avoid normative responses due to the semi-structured open-ended interview being formatted in a 'nonstandardised' manner. Still, it is considered here that there are limitations for such studies employing qualitative methods in this manner for investigating the development of coaching knowledge. This assertion rests on three points: 1) the inability of coaches to recognise and express their own practitioner embodied knowledge; 2) the effect of biases and selective memory recall of participants when reflecting on their own historical career development, and; 3) sampling coaches limits the recognition of how social structures influence coach learning and development.

In respect of the first criticism, the literature has noted athletes acquire and develop deeply set coaching views and beliefs throughout their athletic careers (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Cushion et al., 2003; Lemyre et al., 2007). This has meant the elite athlete to high-performance coach career trajectory is seen to be based upon the assumption that practitioner embodied and informal knowledge (including tacit knowledge) derived from informal contexts are important for the successful fulfilment of a high-performance coach's role (Kelly, 2008; Schempp et al., 2010). Directly sampling coaches for the purposes of

elucidating how this form of subconscious practitioner-embodied knowledge is acquired and how this is then developed is argued as being problematic. The very nature of practitioner-embodied knowledge is not only acquired at the level of the subconscious but also operationalised at a subconscious level (Bourdieu, 1984).

The notion of acquiring knowledge subconsciously and also acting upon this knowledge subconsciously leads onto the second criticism. Bearing in mind that most coach development studies have sampled perceived ‘expert’ coaches to analyse how they attained that level, Ericsson, Prietula and Cokely (2007) contend that attaining genuine expert status requires individuals to engage in deliberate practice in conjunction of also thinking deliberately for working on eliminating weaknesses (see also Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993). This means that over time an expert’s decision making is susceptible to become automatic, or subconscious, and can therefore lead to ‘intuition biases’ hindering their effectiveness to explain what actually makes them experts (Ericsson et al., 2007). Therein, when perceived experts are interviewed directly, caution of the conclusions which these studies present can be made on the basis that ‘anecdotal, selective recall, and one-off events all can present insufficient, often misleading, examples of expertise’ (*ibid*, p.3). Nash and Sproule’s (2009, p.121) findings illustrate this point as they identified that their sample of perceived expert coaches ‘could offer no real insight into their designation as experts’. Added to this is the notion that some studies have failed to make the distinction between *assuming* their coaches of analysis to already uphold expertise coaching status, but instead are only on the path of working towards expertise (Abraham, Collins & Martindale, 2006). With all of these assertions combined, caution on the recent proclamations of the developmental processes for how expertise coaching is attained can be made.

In respect of the third criticism, whilst it is recognised that the direct sampling of coaches is a valuable research angle for analysing the acquisition of coaching knowledge and the pathways coaches negotiate in their development, it is contended here that such

coach-centric views also have the tendency to overlook the broader role of the socio-cultural context which frames the coach's learning process (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2016; Hassanin & Light, 2014; Jones, 2007). This research lacuna has been recognised by Cushion and colleagues (2010, p.37), who identified how knowledge acquisition via embodied practice-based learning is subject to valorisation by 'others' who contest, legitimise or recreate both the learning processes coaches must negotiate and their subsequent selection and employment in the elite sports field.

This line of inquiry has been extended by a number of studies examining the micro-political context which coaches are situated within (Potrac & Jones, 2009a & 2009b; Potrac et al., 2012; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). The interaction with other social agents and social structures identified within these studies has valuably informed the field of the power dynamics that coaches have to contend with throughout their development and practice (e.g. Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008), as the 'contextual parameters that define and to some extent govern fields or cultures are clearly central to how learning 'happens' within them' (Mallett et al., 2016, p.25). Yet with an exception of a very select few (e.g. Becker, 2009; Gearity, 2011; Jowett & Carpenter, 2015; Purdy et al., 2008), the majority of these studies have persisted on directly sampling coaches. This point remains even with research having diversified their methodologies. For example, autoethnographies of researchers' own coaching practice has signified the difficulties that coaches have had to contend with whilst negotiating the social surroundings during their coaching practices (Jones, 2006; Potrac et al., 2012; Mills, 2015; Zehntner & McMahon, 2014). Although these studies are highly original in both their methodologies and findings, they nevertheless still explore the learning and development of coaching practice directly from the perspective of coaches.

Greater examination of the socio-cultural factors which influence the interplay between career trajectory and coach learning can contribute towards understanding why individuals with an elite competitive playing tenure succeed in attaining elite coaching

appointments, and why the career pathway between elite athlete and high-performance coach persists. The emphasis on the dialectical interrelationship between individual practices and structural power hierarchies within elite sport coaching is suggestive of a need to investigate how the practices of ‘other’ groups (Cushion et al., 2010, p.37) can contour the individual coaches’ learning and pathways. These ‘other’ groups include professional bodies with the power to provide coaching accreditation and other employees of professional sports clubs such as players or the senior management board. Amongst these groups, club directors are pivotal, as they possess the ability to valorise specific coaching practices and philosophies through their recruitment and selection practices (Carter, 2006; Collins, 2009; Kelly, 2008). In turn, they are able to shed light upon why the pathway of former elite athletes into high-performance coaching roles is perpetuated.

The literature examining organisational structures of both RU (Cruickshank, Collins & Minten, 2013) and AF clubs (Relvas, Littlewood, Nesti, Gilbourne & Richardson, 2010) has already identified club directors to be a powerful group within professional sports clubs who have the authority to dismiss head coaches (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Frick, Barros & Prinz, 2010; Koning, 2003). As Carter (2006, p.107) noted in his book on the history of British AF managers, club directors contributed to the ‘continued resistance to the professionalisation’ of the coaching role by devaluing formal coach accreditation through the ‘assumption that playing experience was the main qualification’ for a football manager’s role. Despite the considerable influence directors have for coach recruitment and development, the criteria by which the appointments of high-performance coaches are based upon remain under-investigated. Therein on the basis of the present project wanting to address the sub-research questions that have been formulated, the sample of elite AF and RU club senior directors was identified.

It was contended that only senior committee board members and directors who had been, and continued to be actively involved in the recruitment and appointment processes of



head coaches would satisfactorily constitute a viable theoretical sample. Stringent theoretical sample criteria were constructed and imposed throughout participant recruitment. Any study participant must have currently been at the time of invitation ‘in a position central to the recruitment process of employing coaches, managers or directors of rugby’. As the elite athlete to high-performance coach pathway was the topic of investigation, the second criteria formulated was that any participant at the time of interview must have been employed by a high-performance club competing in either the top three divisions of AF or the top two divisions of RU within England or Wales. Any clubs currently competing outside of these leagues were not considered to be competing at the high-performance level<sup>35</sup>. The rationale for placing an emphasis on the inclusion of the term ‘currently’ was based upon the desire of having any forthcoming findings relevant and contemporary as possible to the current phenomena.

## **4.2 Method**

### **4.2.1 Pilot study procedure**

The study received ethical approval from the University of Lincoln’s Ethics Board on the premise that a pilot study was completed. By virtue of the research topic residing within the field of elite sports, it was anticipated from the outset that the prospective participation of an ‘elite’ population would be heavily constrained concerning their time allowances (Dexter, 2006; Harvey, 2010, 2011; Mickecz, 2012; Richards, 1996). Therefore, a pilot study interviewing semi-professional club directors was undertaken prior to approaching senior directors situated within the elite high-performance level of AF and RU.

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<sup>35</sup> Please refer to the pilot study and iteration one’s letters of invitation and participant detail confirmation forms (appendices A-D) to view how this was explained to any prospective participant.

The aim of the pilot study was centred on receiving internal and external feedback for refining the interview protocol of interview structure and question delivery in regards to the language used by the researcher (Harvey, 2010). The position of my own identity as a researcher was an important feature here. I viewed my position as a ‘semi-outsider’ (section 1.2.1) on the basis that I was not accustomed to operating within the field of elite sport or commerce. Therein a pilot study helped me to reflect on the interview structure, question delivery and language used for attaining rich data later on (Harvey, 2010). Furthermore, the recruitment processes of the pilot study helped refine the first iteration’s participant recruitment procedures.

In total three participants from a semi-professional environment were recruited for the pilot study. One was a senior chairperson of a semi-professional AF club competing in the fourth tier of the English AF league. Two chairpersons of two semi-professional RU clubs were also recruited and whose teams competed in the fourth tiers of the English RU leagues. All three of the pilot study’s participants were recruited through sending letters of invitation (appendix A) by email and post. Postal and email addresses were obtained via each club’s website. Approximately 75 letters of invitation were sent to potential participants. A total of 10 letters of invitation were returned which disclosed whether the individuals were willing to participate in the study or not. Only the three participants who were recruited identified that they met the sampling criteria outlined on the letters of invitation. The other seven returned letters of invitation either stated that the individual was not willing to participate in the study or they did not meet the sampling criteria. All participants were interviewed in person at locations of their choice. Two of the locations were at the club grounds and another was at the business headquarters which the participant was the Chief Executive of.

Through my own reflexive processes and asking the participants directly at the culmination of the interviews, the pilot study achieved the desired aims of refining an

interview structure and the phrasing of questions. The study also identified the difficulties of participant recruitment, even though these individuals did not operate within the field of elite sport. A full explanation as to how the participant recruitment procedures were undertaken for the first iteration is now provided prior to the procedure for data collection and analysis.

#### **4.2.2 Participant recruitment: Professional club senior directors**

Although the recruitment procedures of the pilot study did not return a high respondent rate or a high success rate for participant recruitment, letters of invitation were still distributed to prospective participants via email and post. It was considered that this method was the most productive mode for participant recruitment in contrast to alternative methods. Approximately 75 letters of invitation were distributed. Only business email and postal addresses were used which were once again obtained through accessing individual club websites. The letter of invitation and supplementary participant detail confirmation form for the first iteration evolved from that of the pilot study and can be compared by viewing appendices A to D. Supplementary detail regarding the difficulties I encountered when attempting to recruit participants is detailed within the methodological memo at the end of this iteration (section 4.5, p.115).

The number of participants recruited from letters of invitation sent via emails or post was five in total. One additional participant was recruited through snowball sampling immediately after the completion of an interview (Noy, 2008; Sadler, Lee, Lim & Fullerton, 2010). At the end of each interview, each participant was directly asked if they would be willing to provide the contact details of any directors at the same or other clubs who they

believed met the sampling criteria (Kelly & Waddington, 2006). At the same time, my business cards and additional hard copies of the letters of invitations were also left with the participants for the possibility of these to be circulated throughout their social networks (Dexter, 2006). If required, this request was repeated when the interview transcript was sent via email to the participant for completing the transcript member checking reliability procedure. A letter of invitation was attached to the email so the participants had an electronic copy which could have potentially been circulated. Although these snowball sampling strategies were initially fruitful, since they yielded a number of contact details and responses, only one of these participants was ultimately recruited and interviewed after having met the sampling criteria when asked to confirm this.

By acknowledging Harvey's (2010) recommendations of researchers employing diverse recruitment strategies, running in parallel to sending letters of invitation, another participant recruitment strategy was employed. The League Managers' Association (LMA) and my own professional associates who possessed an extended amount of personal and business contacts within the field of elite sport were utilised. Another 10 prospective participants were contacted via this mode. Only one participant of these 10 met the sampling criteria and was subsequently interviewed as a result of this recruitment strategy.

#### **4.2.3 Participants**

A total of eight white British male participants were recruited during the 2012/13 English AF and RU seasons. All participants confirmed to the researcher that they resided on the club's board of directors at the time of invitation. All participants were central to the recruitment process of selecting and appointing head coaches for the men's senior teams as

well. The participants were all directors of clubs that were currently competing in the top three divisions in English AF and top two division in English RU as represented below in table three. Two of the participants had not previously been a coach prior to being appointed as a director. One of these participants was at the time of interview, however, undertaking his level three coaching qualification. Additionally, five of the eight participants had previously been competitive elite players. Table three outlines aspects of each participant's career profile.

**Table 3 Sample characteristics**

| Pseudonym | Sport | Level club competed at      | Ex-player* | Previous coach* |
|-----------|-------|-----------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Oliver    | AF    | Premier League              |            |                 |
| Eric      | AF    | Championship                |            | ✓               |
| Samuel    | AF    | League One                  |            | ✓               |
| Shaun     | RU    | Premiership                 | ✓          | ✓               |
| Kirk      | RU    | Championship                | ✓          |                 |
| Keith     | RU    | Championship                | ✓          | ✓               |
| Tony      | RU    | Championship                | ✓          | ✓               |
| Ron       | RU    | English National League One | ✓          | ✓               |

\*minimum standard recognised was representation at a professional club in the national league

#### **4.2.4 Procedure**

The ethical conditions set were that all of the participants' anonymity would be upheld throughout the entirety of the study. Thereby pseudonyms have been used throughout the reporting of the results (Jones, 2015; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Informed consent was

obtained from each participant prior to conducting a semi-structured open-ended interview. Informed consent documents were emailed to either the participants directly, or to their personal secretaries a minimum of 48 hours in advance of the interview. Two copies of informed consent were signed by the participants; I retained one copy and another was retained by the participants for their own records. The letters of invitations and informed consent expressed the intention to audio-record the interviews, how long the data would be stored for, the location of storage, how the participants' anonymity would be protected and when the opportunity of transcript member checking would be provided (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Thus, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by myself on all occasions. All club, coach and player names were coded.

All of the participants confirmed their preferred mode of interview (face-to-face or telephone) when returning the letter of invitation. In the cases where participants identified their preference to be interviewed face-to-face, the participants provided their preferred location (see appendices C and D). In total, seven semi-structured individual interviews were conducted face-to-face and one was conducted over the telephone. The face-to-face interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis. Six interviews were held in the participants' offices either at the club stadium or club training grounds. Another was held in the headquarters of an external private business where the participant was a director.

Prior to commencing with the interviews, I provided another outline of who I was, the purpose of the study and the study's ethical conditions. Outlining this last point then led me to courteously reiterate the intention to audio-record the interview (Dexter, 2006). This was all for the purposes of enhancing transparency and gaining participant trust in the quest of attaining rich and valid data via demonstrating the appropriate level of etiquette (Harvey, 2010).

Due to the extensive work commitments and consequent limited availability of participants, interviews were relatively concise (Richards, 1996), lasting between 24 and 55

minutes (mean = 41.43 minutes,  $\pm$  12.42). Semi-structured open-ended interviews were conducted in order to elicit significant depth of understanding of the respondent's subjective perceptions of the coaching role and coach recruitment (Bryant, 2012). Lines of questioning orientated upon the specific sub-research questions, but were not limited to: the participant's role at the club and employment history; their current club's coaching staff structure; the recruitment processes employed when appointing head coaches; and how candidates from an elite athletic background applying or being considered for head coaching positions evidenced the necessary skills and knowledge for successful appointment.

Probing beyond the core schedule was completed during interviews to allow participants to elaborate or provide a more detailed explanation of their perceptions and experiences, whilst also affording me as a researcher more flexibility to identify the central and emergent themes more intuitively (Gratton & Jones, 2010). As a consequence of applying GTM's central tenet of constant comparison between data sets, literature and researcher memos (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) the interview schedules were continuously refined and developed throughout the duration of the study. The questions I posed therefore gradually became ever more focussed by specifically directing questions on emerging themes.

'Hypothetical questions' were frequently posed and were structured in a manner which highlighted the themes generated from previous interviews (Merriam, 2014). Highlighted in table four is an interview extract taken from Eric's interview, a director at an AF Championship club, which illustrates how hypothetical questions were used.

**Table 4 Example of hypothetical question used within the interview structure**

|      |  |
|------|--|
| Alex | Right, because some of the other clubs that I've been speaking to in rugby as well as, I find that this quick transition between being a player and a head coach or a manager, people haven't got that financial acumen. So hypothetically speaking, if you're going forward and you are looking to appoint someone, how much emphasis do you put on that financial acumen regarding the capabilities of actually being effective? |
|------|--|

|      |   |
|------|---|
| Eric | It wouldn't be a pre-requisite but it would be, it is very helpful for me when they have those skills, but we, you know, if they do manager's courses they do about business and budgeting and leadership and things like that... |
|------|---|

As can also be inferred from table four, questions which reprised as 'devil's advocate' questions were regularly integrated into the interview structure (Merriam, 2014). Devil's advocate questions were designed to challenge and provoke considered thought on a particular point or position contrary to the views which the participant may have previously disclosed or at least inferred within their interview (Merriam, 2014). As can be viewed from the extract taken from Eric's interview, devil's advocate questions were also used across sports to elicit contradictory or comparable views for defining a substantive theory but also for developing a middle-range theory (see section 2.2).

In contrast to focussing too much on the emerging themes, however, and resulting in me possibly overlooking inquiry into other potentially significant areas, the interview schedules also incorporated very broad and open questions to provoke the participant to consider themes which had not been explored within each interview. The strategic use and implementation of these is now explained in relation to validity and reliability of the data collection procedures.

#### **4.2.5 Validity and reliability**

I integrated additional questions into the interview schedules to counter any concerns of a lack of validity and reliability for the thesis' results. Towards the culmination of the interviews, re-clarification and summary questions were posed to the participants (Patton, 2015). An example can be viewed in table five which has been taken from an extract of Oliver's interview (the first question also highlights the use of a hypothetical question). This



enabled a form of reliability to be covered within the interviews. These questions allowed me to compare the emerging interview themes from the responses of previous questions to the participants' answers of the re-clarification and summary questions.

**Table 5 Example of re-clarification and summary questions used within the interview schedule**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Alex   | And final question from me then, it's, if you're going forward, if you could prioritise the things that you're looking for therefore in a head coach or manager, what would those be again?  |
| Oliver | So in no particular order, top three criteria would be: one, has a proven track record; two, has a vision and; three, is a kind of cultural fit with the club.   |
| Alex   | And a cultural fit would be? Can you just explain that again, does that impact on the business model? Because you have spoken in business model terms quite a lot.   |
| Oliver | Yeah it's well, ok, so, again let's try and, so if you're in a club whose brand and values were kind of like family friendly, fun, ethical, would you ever want to employ a manager who had been you know accused of taking bungs? |

Re-clarification questions were intentionally posed to counteract the possibility of the participant not disclosing an important point on the basis that I overlooked a theme by not asking a question on it. In the occurrence of whether an additional point was raised within the participants' responses to these questions, then further probing could be undertaken to ensure an accurate and holistic representation of the participants' thoughts were captured. As demonstrated in the extract taken from Oliver's interview, no contradictory responses were provided however, and there were no additional themes which arose within any of these final summary and re-clarification questions.

At the culmination of each interview, I reiterated the study's ethical agreements of confidentiality. Reliability procedures of transcript member checking were also reiterated at this point (Carlson, 2010). Indeed, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.314) once affirmed that transcript member checking is the 'most crucial technique for establishing credibility' in

such a context.<sup>36</sup> Participants were provided with a date of 10 working days for when they could expect to electronically receive their transcripts. The process of transcript member checking was explained by explicitly stating that this was not a mandatory requirement for the participants to complete. Yet should they wish to check whether the transcripts were ‘accurate, balanced, fair and respectful’ of their views (Sparkes & Smith, 2009, p.495), then they were entitled to revise or amend any statements on the electronic copy and return this to me within 10 working days of receiving it. As the transcripts were transcribed verbatim (Maxwell, 2012), the participants were also asked to avoid being overly concerned with grammatical errors of their speech when their interviews were presented in writing, although, should they wish to amend anything which they were not content with then they were fully entitled to do so (Carlson, 2010). Only two participants made amendments to data within their transcripts by clarifying the prose and grammar for some of their answers. All of the other participants confirmed by email, either directly or indirectly through their personal secretaries that they were with happy with the content of their transcripts. Finally, I made theoretical memos of each interview as soon as possible after their completion (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These produced tentative concepts which were examined further within the questioning in the following interviews and facilitated the abductive constant comparison method of data analysis.

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<sup>36</sup> I recognised that member checking has its drawbacks for the representation of research participants’ views. The alternatives provided, such as having the participants act as ‘collaborators in the data analysis process’ (Hodge, Henry & Smith, 2014, p.63) or conducting a follow-up discussion with each participant, or a small selection to reflect accuracy and meaning (Doyle, 2007; Swann, Crust & Allen-Collinson, 2016) was considered infeasible based on the amount of study participants and their time constraints. It is for this reason why an orthodox transcript member checking process was completed in this and subsequent iterations.

#### 4.2.6 Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed by myself. This process performed a cursory form of descriptive open coding in addition to the tentative theoretical memos I made. These initial theoretical memos and open codes were at this point only tentative and were not ratified until the participant had completed the process of transcript member checking or the deadline of 10 working days had elapsed (Carlson, 2010). As has been outlined in chapter two, initial descriptive open coding was followed by axial and then selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The computer software package of QSR\*NVivo 10 (QSR International, UK) was used for all data analysis (see Hutchinson et al., 2010).

Before introducing the results, it is important to reassert the abductive research strategy which the project employed. My own *a priori* assumptions explicated in the ‘researcher identity memo’ and my theoretical lens of the social theories overviewed within the theoretical sensitivity phase (sections 3.2.1-3.2.3) guided data collection and analysis to a degree but importantly did not constrain this process. The theory which the data has been conceptualised to have indeed been interpreted to have emerged from the data through this abductive analysis (Blaikie, 2009) when referring back to extant literature and the data via the constant comparison procedure of data collection and analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; 2015; Hallberg, 2006). As an intention to attain utmost clarity for the reader and to avoid the messy pitfalls of attempting to present the data analysis in an abductive fashion, the results have been presented in an inductive manner. To conceptualise the social processes for why the directors appointed ‘fast-tracked’ coaches and their views on coach learning and development, the data fitted with Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, cultural and symbolic capital, hexis, and doxa which will all be discussed in line with the themes generated from the data.

### **4.3 Results and discussion**

The iteration's sub-research questions were: 1) why are elite athletes seen as suitable candidates to be 'fast-tracked' into high-performance coaching post-athletic roles, and; 2) how and what type of coaching knowledge was acquired during a competitive-playing career? The results for the two questions all interwove and produced a number of core substantive themes that centred on the view that 'fast-tracked' coaches were able to engender player 'respect' more quickly in comparison to candidates without a competitive-athletic background. The results obtained suggested the directors' judgements for 'fast-tracking' competitive-athletes into post-athletic coaching roles centred upon meeting their club's objectives. These were focussed on successful on-field team performance which reflected the 'club's philosophy'. The concept of 'club philosophy' significantly grounded the directors' views on why they purposefully 'fast-tracked' elite athletes into coaching roles for their clubs. Athletes being socialised to their clubs, and thus sensitised to the 'club's philosophy', was considered to be a social process central in constructing what the directors deemed as appropriate coaching knowledge and skills which were perceived to be easily transferrable into a post-athletic coaching role. Therefore, the discussion brings these core themes together when addressing the two sub-research questions.

#### **4.3.1 Directors as arbiters of taste and cultural intermediaries**

By virtue of being situated in an intermediate position within their respective clubs, the directors' interpretations of their club objectives and philosophies were developed through a complex interweaving of factors, as the directors were not only accountable to chairpersons but also to additional stakeholders such as spectators and players. The directors

therefore participating in the study acted as cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu, 1984) arbitrating between the values and beliefs of the club's stakeholders. This meant that the directors implicitly regarded themselves as the embodiment of 'their' club's collective values, and thus 'custodians' of them, which directed their practice during the selection and recruitment processes of head coaches. Subsequently, although the directors within their responses referred to *their* interpretation and abstraction of the club's *collective* values, these are however interpreted and situated as the embodiment of the directors' *own* arbitrated values which they subconsciously or consciously practiced.

When addressing the study's aims of examining how and why senior club directors firstly considered and then secondly supported head coaches negotiating a 'fast-track' coaching pathway, and the value directors ascribed to specific forms of coaching knowledge, the effect of the directors' intermediary position is an important point. The discussion returns to this point after initially examining what the directors based their recruitment processes on, notably: how in comparison to other coaching candidates, head coaches who had been elite athletes were perceived to be able to quickly legitimise their authority over the players and; the symbolic value the directors attributed to informal sources of coaching knowledge.

#### **4.3.2 'Straight away he has to wow everybody': The symbolic value of player-coach 'respect'**

When selecting and appointing head coaches, senior club directors were concerned with whether the prospective head coach was capable of achieving successful on-field team performances. As Oliver described, the primary attribute which the directors profiled for achieving this mandate was the necessity for head coaches to establish and then maintain "the players' respect". The term 'respect' principally related to coaches maintaining a

position of authority over playing staff, whilst at the same time fostering positive player-coach relationships in order to get the maximum performance output from the players (Jowett & Carpenter, 2015; Potrac et al., 2002). Kirk and Keith outlined how this guided them as directors when recruiting and appointing any prospective head coach, irrespective of whether they had once been an elite athlete or not:

What do I look for? I think that you've got to ask the players how and what they think of the guys, because ultimately they are the assets which you need to sweat. And if a player or players aren't reactive to the coaches, you can be the best coach in the world, but if you can't resonate with that player then you make a choice, you either get rid of them, the player, or you get rid of the coach. (Kirk)

If the players don't respect you and don't believe in what you are saying then complete waste of time, might as well not be there. (Keith)

For coaches with an elite athletic background however, the directors judged player to coach respect to be gained through the transferral of capital and status that a candidate brought with them when making the transition from a competitive playing career into a head coaching role. The more successful the playing career, the greater accumulation of capital (Christensen, 2013), and therein, the more elevated the individual's status was because of converting this cultural capital into symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Head coaches embodying symbolic capital were considered to generate increased levels of respect on the basis of player subordination (Cushion & Jones, 2006). Samuel illustrated the manner in which he considered the prestige, and symbolic capital associated with a successful competitive playing tenure, helped his current head coach legitimise his power in fostering the players' respect:

...when you look at the effect (current head coach name) has when he speaks, the respect that you can see in people's faces when he does speak, I think that's the only thing a great footballer can bring over and above you know a manager who wasn't a great footballer. It's just when they [players] just presume that manager was a great player therefore what he is saying must be the gospel. (Samuel)

Demonstrating Bourdieu's (2000, p.166) conceptualisation of how 'symbolic capital enables forms of domination' of those within the field who perceive it to be embodied by agents, it was upon this basis that a culture of promoting retiring elite athletes into head coaching positions was built. In short, practices of hexis experienced during a successful playing career were assumed by directors to suggest a coach would embody significant symbolic capital which would be immediately recognised, valued and subordinated to by playing staff. For instance, Tony explained how he perceived a coach's ability to embody symbolic capital influenced recruitment strategies of other clubs who might appoint "a coach who's a 'name,' so it brings with him *that* aura, *that* attitude; players immediately respond" (original emphasis).

As Tony inferred, the directors also placed significant emphasis on the immediacy with which head coaches were required to generate player respect. Tony continued to stress that any newly appointed head coach had to "hit the ground running so that people would respond to them". Keith elaborated upon the importance of this further:

...straight away he has to speak, wow everybody, you know to get that respect and think oh right this guy is pretty good, he knows what he is talking about. I think if you've been a player, but you've been a good player within that then automatically the boys are going to start listening to you and respect you. (Keith)

The embodiment of symbolic capital was perceived to enable head coaches to legitimise their authority and ensure players would consent to this through enhanced team performance output. Upholding such a view for the immediacy of generating respect was a key reason behind the perpetuation of a 'fast-tracked' elite athlete to high-performance coach pathway. It was considered that head coach candidates not possessing tenure as an elite athlete would not be capable of achieving instant player respect as required, but instead, would have to negotiate this over an extended period through their coaching practice. With the directors placing priority on head coaches immediately achieving positive on-field results, the affordance of an extended period in post to achieve player respect through

coaching practice was not always guaranteed (see Bridgewater, 2006).

Underpinning the elite athlete to coach pathway was the assumption of a shared habitus, not only between players and coaches (Cushion & Jones, 2006), but also the directors. As will be expanded upon later, the directors sought candidates who were perceived to share the same coaching values and philosophy as themselves and ‘the clubs’, and who were judged to best continue practicing these when appointed as head coach. Therefore, ‘fast-tracked’ elite athlete to high-performance coach appointments were all made within clubs by internally promoting senior players into head coaching roles upon their retirement from competitive play. The habitus was deemed to mediate positive player-coach relationships in building and supporting the component of player to coach respect. Any head coach candidate possessing a shared habitus was perceived to possess increased levels of cultural capital from the directors themselves as well as the players.

Yeah definitely being a leader, being well respected by the players, being a good player, so not just fitting into the team but being one of the best players in the team. So automatically you know if he does take over the coaching role most people will be like yeah ok yeah I can follow this guy, yeah I’ve done it on the field so why not off the field. (Keith)

According to the directors, tenure as a competitive player prior to transition into coaching helped inform head coaches of the skills and knowledge necessary for effective candidacy (Rynne, 2014). The emphasis placed upon athletic experience is suggestive of a doxic value system in which assumptions were made about the link between athletic competence and coaching ability. In doing so however, it can be conversely suggested that the directors valorised alternative forms of knowledge acquisition by consciously acknowledging the strength of embodied cultural capital that coaches with an elite athletic background brought to the role. It is on this theme that the discussion now turns.



### 4.3.3 'I'd far, far look at character': Hierarchically valuing skills and forms of knowledge

The sources of knowledge and skills to practice effectively as a head coach, principally the ability to generate player to coach respect, were judged by the directors to be informal and derived from a competitive playing career (Cushion et al., 2003). Competitive playing experiences were considered significant in the development of an appropriate habitus with which to mediate the player-coach relationship. Shaun explained which qualities and skills, in his view, he most valued:

Probably people skills is (*sic*) the biggest and most important. You know if a player has come through as a professional player route you will assume he's got the knowledge for the game and so probably yeah it's their personality and people skills. (Shaun)

Associated with people skills, leadership and man-management qualities were most valued by the directors when recruiting and appointing head coaches. These skills were assumed to be associated with a coach's personality.

I think the one thing that you can't give, you can't teach your head coach, is that ability to manage individually, depending on the type of player that you are dealing with. I think that is a really unique skill. (Samuel)

The directors valorised 'natural' and 'in-built' personal characteristics over formal knowledge. For example, although Eric considered formal knowledge and its sources to be important, he did not perceive such knowledge to contribute to the competencies associated with developing positive player relationships and respect. These competencies were seen to derive from a competitive playing background.

...if you were a coach who had come up as a teacher trained coach, which a lot of our [academy] coaches are teacher trained, you've gone to university, learned about planning and goal setting and differentiation and things like that, then that side comes easy to you, but you won't have the knowledge of having played the games at the highest level and that is of course is quite important... (Eric)

Consequently, all of the participants considered it a requirement that head coaches had competed as a player ‘at a level’ of competition to help create this implicit understanding of the field’s tacit rules associated with effective coaching:

You don’t have to have been the best in the world but you have had to have played at a level to understand what’s required in rugby union. (Tony)

I do, I think yeah being a player at some level, I just think helps; I think you’ve had more experiences of different aspects in rugby. (Keith)

Well he doesn’t have to be a top class player... I think it helps [to have played]. I think for the coaches it helps. (Eric)

Indeed, participants valorised the embodiment of practitioner-knowledge derived from informal sources when practicing in the field of elite sport as a competitive athlete. This embodiment was considered more important than formal coaching qualifications and was significant in supporting the elite athlete to high-performance coach pathway. Oliver disregarded formal coaching awards by referring to them as “hygiene factors”, essential criteria on person specifications imposed by international and NGBs of the sport when appointing head coaches in order to professionalise the role (Taylor & Garratt, 2010). The nuanced meaning underscoring Oliver’s comment provided an insight into how formal coach education has impacted this particular context. Ron expressed such a view when reflecting on a previous coaching appointment he had made which resulted in shaping his view on why he did not significantly value formal coaching qualifications:

They [qualifications] don’t really stack up a lot of the time. There are a lot of guys who have got level three or four coaching certificates that can’t coach you know. I employed a bloke who’s done RFU coaching assessor, top of the food chain with all of the qualifications, even got a Welsh RFU senior coaches badge and I put him in front of our forwards because I needed a forwards coach and had to give him the bullet after two months... He just couldn’t cope with it and the lads saw through him straight away. (Ron)

Irrespective of the accumulation of formalised coaching qualifications (institutionalised cultural capital) and associated knowledge, the inability of Ron’s former

coach to establish player respect meant that he was judged to be ineffective. This left Ron, as well as the other participants, assigning little cultural capital to formally accrued knowledge. Although the directors acknowledged the legislation requiring head coaches to possess a specific level of coaching accreditation (Taylor & Garratt, 2010), formal knowledge and its sources were not considered vital in terms of the ability for a coach to work effectively day to day. Instead, the directors considered head coaches having the right ‘character’ to be more important.

...to me there is a difference between RFU level 27 coach or whatever it is and someone who has just raw personality to do the right thing at the right time, to put an arm around someone when it matters, to kick them up the arse when it matters... *I'd far, far look at character...* You are far better recruiting a type of character that is going to be a cultural fit to your club. (Kirk, emphasis added)

Contrasting to Kirk's view, the primacy of natural ability has become somewhat outmoded within the coach education literature (Cushion et al., 2003), since the increasing recognition of coaching being viewed as a social process whereby individuals culturally acquire the skills of effective coaching (Cushion & Jones, 2006). Bourdieu (1977) extends this position by conceptualising agents becoming attuned to cultural expectations of the field in question. Replacing innate or natural character, practical sense is indicative of an agent's habitus at the intersection of the conscious and subconscious decision-making process in negotiating a specific field's cultural expectations (Christensen, 2009). Indeed, immersion in the field through a competitive playing career was deemed by participants to be indicative for the formation of a specific high-performance coaching habitus and deportment (Light & Evans, 2013), imbuing a coach with ‘practical sense’.

By acknowledging how coaches subconsciously embodied the field's dispositions for practicing as a coach in an ‘expert’ manner, practical sense builds upon the concept of tacit knowledge, which as noted in the theoretical sensitivity phase (section 3.1.2.2), has derived from psychological analysis of coach education and coach expertise (Nash & Collins, 2006). The ability to demonstrate practical sense, which reflected expertise, was

assumed to provide significant embodied cultural and symbolic capital to coaches in the field of elite sport. For example, Tony felt that a competitive playing background would inform a head coach's ability to perform and effectively execute their coaching practice as practical sense:

But there's lots of different facets within that [coaching], so scrummage, lineout, back play, defensive play, attacking options, kicking options, so... if you've played rugby and come through you know all about those things and that's what you've been ingrained to but that takes a lot of years to learn properly I believe. So the fact that you've been a player and come through that, you then have that knowledge. Then it's about playing that key or that key and when you play it. That's what coaching is about, but you have to understand if you like, what sound those different bits make and I don't think you can have that unless you've played and played at a level. (Tony)

Tony's view suggested a prolonged competitive playing background informed head coaches of their practical sense in a technical and tactical capacity (Christensen, 2009). It is during this time as an athlete whereby the norms of the field, including personal dispositions of man-management, coupled with technical and tactical astuteness, would have been informally internalised as a tacit, subconscious practical sense. Bourdieu (1990, p.53) described how the habitus of those associated to a specific field 'tends to generate all the 'reasonable', 'common sense' behaviours which are possible within the limits of these regularities'. Such practical sense was not thought to be engendered by formal coaching qualifications.

I suppose like any qualification, it's just a name on a piece of paper, whether you are actually a good coach or not, I don't think it really shows or tells that. (Keith)

Such sentiments follow the general position in the literature on the devaluation of formal coach education (Cassidy et al., 2006; Cushion et al., 2003; Jones et al., 2003; Piggott, 2012 – sections 3.1.2 - 3.1.2.1). The lack of capital, and thus the low overall value formal sources of knowledge were assigned, suggests that practice within the field of elite AF or RU as a competitive player was assumed to constitute a more operant method for acquiring

the most important attributes for successful coaching candidacy. One reason for this was the directors placed additional weight on head coaches acquiring the awareness to embody the individual club's values in their coaching practice. As this was such a significant theme underscoring the directors' views, how this perpetuated the pathway of elite athletes' 'fast-tracked' transitions into high-performance coaching roles will now be discussed.

#### **4.3.4 'Carrying (our) values through': Directors as arbiters of taste**

Directors' perceptions of the 'identity' of 'their' club impacted significantly upon the process of recruitment and appointment of head coaches with an elite athletic background. This was one other reason why formal knowledge sources were not considered as culturally valuable. Instead, embodied practitioner-knowledge experienced by athletes whilst embedded in club culture through a playing tenure was valued more. Directors felt that candidates who had previously been immersed within the same club environment as a player would be able to immediately create robust and effective relationships with players when appointed as a head coach. Indeed, club directors were eager to promote both non-formal and informal coach learning experiences (Mallett et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 2006) amongst existing playing staff to help support their coaching development. For example, Shaun and Kirk each discussed their club's strategies for developing their current players' coaching competencies:

...there are certain individuals that, you know, that because they do coaching with clubs, school, academy lads for us whilst they are still playing, we know whether they are going to come through as good coaches... So we know exactly which players are going to *interact* well with our players later on. (Shaun, emphasis added)

I often look up at senior players who for me extol the values of what it's like to be (local area name) blah blah blah. I offer them jobs within the community team that if they delivered in there then they can one day move into the [senior] coaching team. (Kirk)

This strategic placement of athletes in coaching roles was considered a method in which to profile future coaches, as well as a way to enable current athletes to become accustomed to existing values, practices and beliefs associated with ‘the club’. These values, beliefs and practices related not only to man-management, coaching practice and existing power structures, but also to more ephemeral factors, such as playing style and attitudes. Directors were keen that any prospective head coach should embody and maintain these ‘club values’ through their coaching practice. Shaun considered such reproduction of a club ethos as essential, in order that a coach would “interact well with our players” whilst also making sure they “fit in with our culture... they’ve got to have that same yeah culture that we have”. Consequently, perpetuating the elite athlete to high-performance coach pathway, former elite athletes were considered prime coaching candidates with whom to promote coaching knowledge within the club environment and to enlist into the club’s cultural field via both implicit and explicit means.

In defining which values were considered appropriate for a club, the directors also reflected upon their own careers and how these may have related to the recruitment of head coaches. As table three identifies, only Oliver lacked experience as either an elite coach or competitive athlete out of the eight directors interviewed. Six participants had previously been competitive athletes, whereas five possessed a background as a coach, with another director undertaking a level three coaching qualification at the time of interview. Involvement within both of these interdependent roles of player and coach had itself helped determine the construction of the directors’ own habitus as a recognised member of their elite sporting field. Participants outlined how they assumed the ‘philosophy’ of the club should be practiced, not only in terms of administration and ambitions, but principally in terms of how ‘the game’ should be played (i.e. playing style). Moreover, resembling social capital, personal associations with their clubs’ current players contoured directors’

perceptions of recruiting potential coaching candidates. The opportunity to profile their club's players assisted directors when assessing their potential as coaches. Specific focus centred on a shared habitus, notably how a potential coach embodied and practiced a coaching and playing philosophy, and whether this philosophy matched their own and that of 'the club'. Profiling was also considered vital in terms of developing networks of trust and familiarity over time between individuals already in the field of elite sport (Kelly & Harris, 2010).

A lot of people that I've used are actually people I know and trust already... I haven't gone too far outside of people I don't know... So I've kind of stuck with really people that I know and trust. So either people that I've played with, friends with but I know have a good rugby background, have the same ideas and philosophy as me, how the game is. That's key, if they don't have the same ideas and philosophy there's no point bringing them to the club because we are not going to get on. (Keith)

Therefore, although directors assumed that athletic physical, social and symbolic capital could be converted into cultural and symbolic capital during a coaching tenure, they also had a pre-defined idea about the shared values and beliefs essential to successful coaching practice. This encompassed a specific coaching philosophy and playing style to which coaches should adhere. These practices signify how the reproduction of the prevailing doxic values of the directors, or the 'most precious values' (Bourdieu, 1990, p.68) considered logical and legitimate in the field were selectively sought amongst coaching candidates. This resulted in a normalising practice in terms of coach appointments, as Keith's above statement identifies, directors frequently knew prospective candidates personally. Furthermore, directors sought candidates who were perceived to share the same coaching values and philosophy as themselves and 'the clubs', and who were judged to best continue practicing these when appointed as head coach. Tony outlined how this was symptomatic within elite rugby:

If you took that director of rugby, those values are seen in lots of rugby clubs and I think it's a common culture in rugby that you draw through. And you know, if they

have been good players for you and they demonstrate the values that you like as a club then people promote them into coaching roles. (Tony)

These practices suggested that directors imposed symbolic violence onto coaches during selection by legitimising their own practice and doxic values as the ‘right way’ for ‘their’ clubs. Moreover, directors often non-reflexively sought to reinforce their own symbolic capital by ensuring prestigious coaching appointments reflected their own philosophy (Bourdieu, 1990). In so doing, they assured the reproduction of the field’s dominant values (Cushion & Jones, 2014). In this case, directors emphasised their role as ‘arbiters of taste’ (Christensen, 2009, p.377) for identifying which coaching style and approach were desirable in candidates for head coaching roles. For example, Tony outlined the rationale for the decision of appointing his current head coach by describing the composition of his club’s recruitment panel, noting how he and another former player acted as the arbiters of taste during the process and how they wanted the incoming head coach to continue promoting the club’s values:

...it might not be sort of articulated and put down but actually the things that we do we ensure that we put the people in who make those decisions *who carry those values through*... There was myself, so ex-player of the club, member of the boardroom for fifteen years, so you know I was head coach when we got promoted, sort of to take those [values] through, so that was one. Lucian, again, player through and through for thirty years at the club, so *we were the two sort of custodians of the values and the right fit* [for the club] and had the rugby knowledge... (Tony, emphasis added)

The positions of power which Tony and his fellow board members occupied when acting as ‘cultural custodians’ for their club during the recruitment process, reflects the ability of board members to define the role of a head coach and even to some extent the coaching practices employed at ‘their’ club. In this sense, directors were active agents in producing and reproducing the norms of the elite sport field and the role of a head coach in reproducing the doxic value system contained in their own habitus.

The process through which agents legitimise their occupancy of positions of cultural



dominance as well as the normalising practice for the field, have also been outlined by Cushion and Jones (2014), who found that coaches imposed symbolic violence onto players who did not embody a habitus that they had defined as legitimate within the field. In the present case, directors appeared to do the same in relation to the recognition and selection of specific traits in coaches. These traits and qualities were subjectively judged by directors, who presented the values they sought in a coach as being in the best interests of 'the club' and to help maintain their club's autonomous cultural and playing identity. This desire to uphold an idealised vision of the playing traditions of 'the club', but which they had personally defined, illustrates how 'power valorises culture and culture performs the service of disguising and legitimating power' (Moore, 2004, p.448).

In sum, it appeared that the desire for coaches to possess symbolic capital accrued through an athletic tenure was produced and reproduced by the directors' non-reflexive reproduction of their own habitus and doxic values. This illustrates the habitus/field dialectic as depicted through directors' practice of perpetuating the field's implicit normalising practices. The doxic values underpinning the appointment of head coaches with a competitive athletic background was based on a narrowly defined set of norms associated with 'club traditions' and a specific playing style, which were, at least according to participants, defined in part by the directors themselves. Moreover, it reinforces the claim of habitus to be 'constituted in practice and is always orientated towards practical functions' (Bourdieu, 1990, p.52).

#### **4.3.5 Iteration 1 conclusion**

The current iteration has highlighted how senior directors of elite AF and RU clubs associated coaching knowledge and ability with specific forms of capital when recruiting and appointing head coaches with an elite athletic tenure. At the forefront to their profiling was the ability of any prospective head coach to generate and maintain player ‘respect’. The efficacy of achieving this was judged by personal dispositions, habitus and cultural ‘fit’ within each club. Such observations suggest coach socialisation is central to coach recruitment processes. This socialisation process, however, began during a coach’s previous playing career (Lemyre et al., 2007; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006), because, at least to the participants in the present study, a competitive playing tenure culminated in the majority of agents’ initial socialisation into the learning process for coaching. Moreover, directors actively sought coaches who embodied the same or similar coaching philosophies and practices that they themselves valorised, and thus at the same time was a reason why formal coaching qualifications were devalued. Indeed, the assumption that experiences gained during earlier athletic careers were assumed to provide head coaches with the ability to develop practical sense and an elite sporting habitus commensurate with the requirements of the field of elite sports coaching, goes some way to explaining how the ‘fast-track’ career pathway from elite athlete to high-performance coach is reproduced.

This also outlines the disjuncture between the skills promoted during formal coaching qualifications as club directors valorised practically embodied knowledge over knowledge accrued within formal learning environments. In promoting this aspect, the directors were found to strategically negotiate the ‘fast-track’ elite athlete to high-performance coach pathway by promoting additional practice-based learning experiences. As male competitive athletes are the only population with the means to appropriate and embody the capital and habitus valorised by directors in this iteration, by default this could

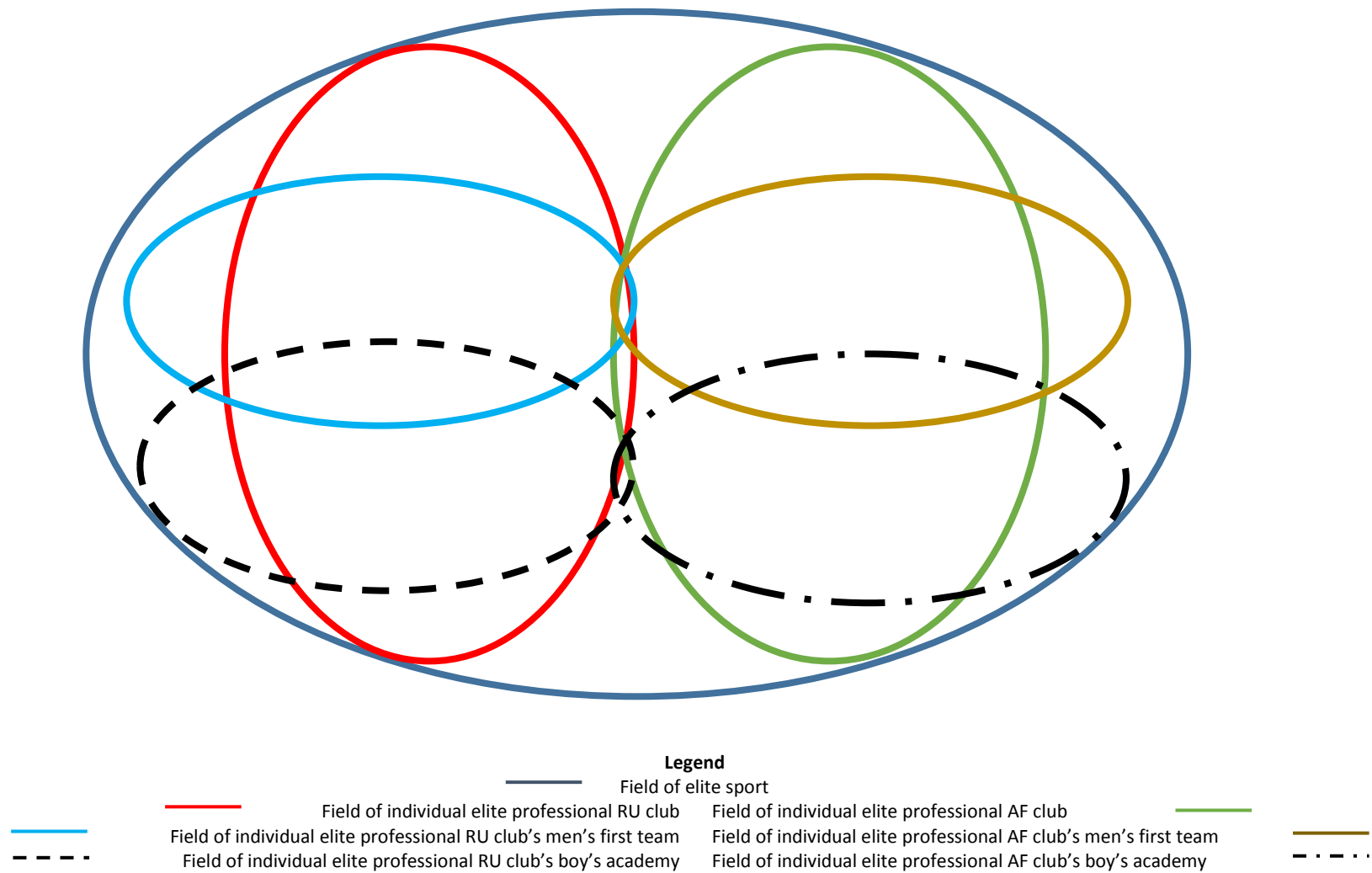
result in the imposition of symbolic violence onto other populations for whom competing in male elite sport is inaccessible, most distinctly women. Finally, because directors practiced in the role of cultural intermediaries when arbitrating the maintenance of ‘their’ club’s values and philosophies, any prospective head coach who possessed a shared habitus with the directors themselves was assigned with greater cultural and symbolic capital and thus considered a more favourable candidate. As all of the study participants who occupied the positions of cultural mediators within ‘their’ clubs were white British males, further examination of this issue could shed light on the lack of representation of women, disability populations, along with black and ethnic minorities in head coaching positions at the elite performance levels of men’s AF and RU within England.

#### **4.4 Theoretical memo (1/3)**

Analysis of the data revealed how Bourdieu’s theoretical framework had the capacity to conceptualise the actions of the senior directors in regards to their conscious and subconscious practices for how they appointed coaches with a competitive-athletic background. By moving away from agency coach-centric samples, the influence of the senior directors’ practices has shed light on the structurally driven social processes which contribute to the ‘fast-track’ transition of athletes into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles. Bourdieu’s theoretical framework has, however, been subjected to a number of criticisms, most markedly on how his work has been considered to be overly deterministic and objectivist (e.g. Evens, 1999; King, 2000 - the thesis goes onto critically appraise these criticisms in forthcoming iterations). Nevertheless, in respect of the first iteration’s data, Bourdieu’s efforts to abridge subjectivism and objectivism, along with placing the habitus as the link between agency and structures is regarded here to productively explain the

processes underpinning the cultural reproduction for the perpetuation of athletes' 'fast-tracked' transitions into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles.

Moreover, Bourdieu's notion of field and the delimited composition of fields as layered social spaces is a useful conceptual tool which has explained the importance the senior directors placed on preferring to draw '*their*' clubs' competitive-athletes into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles in comparison to athletes from any other club. In this regard, the departments of each club, such as youth academies, can also each be considered to reprise as semi-autonomous delimited fields within the larger delimited field of the club that is situated within the field of elite sport. Figure seven (p.112) illustrates the composition and relationships of these delimited fields within the field of elite sport. The notion that youth academies reprise as a delimited field was an important juncture for the project and a fundamental reason for the second iteration's theoretical sample of academy managers.



**Figure 7 Representation of the delimited fields of elite and youth performance AF and RU situated within the field of elite sport**

The significance of field as a concept which underpinned the ‘fast-track’ transition from competitive-athlete to high-performance coach came to prominence through the conduct of the iteration. It was considered by the directors that transferal of capital between the fields of elite AF and elite RU was not viable. Essentially, an AF director would not consider appointing a former RU athlete or coach as the head coach for their club, and vice-versa. This was explicitly outlined by Ron in particular. The following extract has been taken from Ron’s interview and framed a theoretical memo taken at the time of the first iteration. It covers the scenario of when the RU World Cup winning coach, Sir Clive Woodward transferred into an elite AF field, firstly as Performance Director (Jack, 2005; Otway, 2005) and then later as Director of Football (Ashton, 2005; Winter, 2005) at Southampton FC in 2005. Ron considered the transition of social agents between the fields of elite RU and AF, and vice versa, as not viable on the basis that such individuals lacked credibility which can be interpreted to align to cultural and symbolic capital specific to each field:

**Ron:** Well there’s never been any evidence of a football manager or a football coach coming into rugby has there?

**Alex:** *There’s been Clive Woodward (from RU to AF).*

**Ron:** He’s the only one that’s dabbled with it.

**Alex:** *Dabbled yeah.*

**Ron:** And just dabbled is the word. And never, I couldn’t see players giving somebody, I couldn’t see Man’ United giving somebody like Clive Woodward given any credibility whatsoever. Yes he’s got management skills of that there is no doubt, I mean the bloke has won a World Cup... But, you know, as for the concept of him going to say Aston Villa and standing up in front of players and starting to talk about you know midfield, defence, I can’t see that being credible.

Although Bourdieu’s work has received considered criticism, the significance of his theoretical framework has been shown, in part, from the data of iteration one to be conceptually aligned to the phenomena of elite athletes’ transitions into high-performance

coaching roles from the perspective of the senior directors of elite AF and RU clubs. As such, Bourdieu's concepts acted as sensitising concepts (Bowen, 2006) for the project going forwards and abductively informed the continuation of the research process. On this note, from the conduct of this iteration, another theoretical sample of academy directors was identified. Therein the following chapter details the procedures which were undertaken of firstly theoretically justifying the identification of the new sample and secondly for collecting data.

#### **4.5 Methodological memo (1/3)**

I encountered many difficulties when attempting to access senior directors of elite AF and RU clubs in order to collect the data for this iteration. As a result of these difficulties the sample size was small. Future studies advancing this line of analysis would benefit from continuing with participant recruitment to increase the sample sizes and determine if the themes identified from this iteration are an accurate representation for a larger sample. This methodological memo considers some of these participant recruitment difficulties and discusses the implications of such issues for the length and quality of some of the interviews.

Upon reflection, during and after the process of participant recruitment, the main difficulty stemmed from what I perceived to be a lack of my own social capital within the field of elite sport. I mentioned at the beginning of the thesis that I considered myself to be a semi-outsider to the fields of elite AF and RU when beginning the project (section 1.2.1). Yet I began participant recruitment for this particular iteration eighteen months into the project as a result of conducting it on a part-time basis. From having been immersed within the academic field during this period, I felt from the very outset of participant recruitment that I was now very much a total outsider to the field of elite sport. Therefore my own position as a researcher had now moved and this had what I perceived to be an adverse effect on my ability to access such a population independently.

The fact that I was conducting the research on a part-time basis also had another detrimental effect on my ability to recruit more participants. I was very aware that I wanted to avoid certain times of the year when proposing interview dates. Like accountants have an increased workload towards the end of the financial year, I was aware that AF directors would be busy during the two transfer windows and more so towards the end of these windows (end of August and January). These were probably the best times for my own workload however, as I had lighter periods of teaching at these points when compared to the



rest of the academic year of September to May. The beginning of the British summer of June to July was also a convenient time for me to conduct interviews but this was the off season for both AF and RU leagues and a time when most directors were away from their offices on annual leave. Consequently, I found that the best time where participants were more receptive to conducting an interview was during the times where I was busiest with my full-time teaching commitments. This meant that the ability to conduct the constant comparison method of analysis was difficult as on occasions I was unable to fully transcribe and complete participant member checking prior to coding the data before the next interview took place. Therefore, some of the subsequent interviews may have suffered from this as I was unable to probe on potentially strong emerging themes that had emanated from previous interviews. To overcome this, for the next iteration I decided to stagger the distribution of letters of recruitment over an entire year in order to allow me to fully conduct the constant comparison mode of data analysis.

Furthermore, after having limited success with participant recruitment initially, and realising that my own lack of social capital may have been an issue, I engaged with external organisations, such as the LMA, who I perceived would have an interest in the iteration's results. Initially I found this to be a productive strategy as a number of potential participants were identified on the basis that they had been receptive to participating in previous surveys which these external organisations had internally conducted. However, as previously mentioned in section 4.2.2 (p.86-7), only one participant was successfully recruited from this process as the majority did not fall within the sampling criteria. Nevertheless, I learnt a lot from this process and implemented further engagement with external organisations for participant recruitment in subsequent iterations.

During the conduct of this iteration, the data suggested that the senior directors subjectively profiled their club's athletes' future coaching talent. It was encouraged by the senior directors that these profiled athletes were to be 'offered' coaching roles within the

community departments and the club's attached academies. Club academies were the preferred destination as it was considered that within these delimited fields the culture of the club could be further embodied by the athletes to shape their future coaching practice. Although this was seen as a logical and commonplace practice within the fields of elite AF and RU, the senior directors could not explain how these values were embodied by these prospective future coaches. This process was considered to be the role and remit of the academy directors. Therefore, the next section outlines how academy directors emerged as a theoretical sample and further illustrates how the project truly followed an iterative process.

## **Chapter 5 - Iteration 2: Academy directors**

The focus of this iteration is located within the delimited fields of high-performance youth RU and AF academies. The iteration is an extension of the first iteration as it addresses the same sub-research questions. Justification for considering academy directors as a pertinent sample in addition to the senior directors is initially provided through a critique of the existing literature (sections 5.1-5.1.2). Clarification of the iteration's aims (section 5.1.3) precedes an outline for the method of data collection and analysis (sections 5.2-5.2.3).

The iteration's results were once again analysed abductively via the constant comparison method in accordance with the project's overarching GTM. The discussion therefore builds upon Bourdieu's concepts that emerged from iteration one but then also details how Foucault's concepts emerged from the data to explain the phenomena's underlying social processes. A further appraisal and critique of Bourdieu and Foucault's theories is subsequently addressed within a theoretical memo chapter (section 5.6). This section has intended to situate Bourdieu and Foucault's work against one and another whilst it also highlights the respective value of how they informed the nature and direction of the project's final iteration.

### **5.1 Theoretical sample**

Iteration one identified that senior directors of elite clubs strategically provided elite competitive-athletes who embodied the desired club values with additional coaching experiences. This was so greater amounts of practically embodied coaching knowledge could be acquired by those deemed as prospective coaches. In so doing, the senior directors

reported that they placed their current elite athletes into a number of additional coaching roles within the semi-autonomous and delimited fields of their clubs. These delimited fields ranged from youth participatory community schemes to youth performance academies. For example, RU directors, Samuel and Kirk outlined this process:

Whilst they [elite athletes] are still playing, they'll work with the academy if they are going in that [post-athletic coaching career] direction. We've got some players now who are already going in that direction. Probably the academy route of introducing, apart from that if anything else it gives them confidence to come straight in and be coaching with the first team. (Samuel)

I often look up at senior players who for me extol the values of what it's like to be (local area name) blah blah blah. I offer them jobs within the community team that if they delivered in there then they can one day move into the [senior] coaching team. (Kirk)

The interviews with the senior directors also identified that not all elite athletes who transitioned into post-athletic coaching careers actually sought to attain coaching roles working with elite adults. Instead, the senior directors identified some elite athletes possessed ambitions to transition into post-athletic coaching roles working within the delimited fields of professional club academies in order to coach youth performance athletes. The operational memo made at the culmination of the iteration signified that this particular finding was an important juncture for the project:

#### Researcher Operational Memo (inputted on 17/07/2013)

In most cases it seemed that senior directors encouraged elite athletes to accumulate coaching experiences within their academies prior to entering into a post-athletic coaching role within the senior team. These coaching experiences supplemented their competitive-athletic careers. Senior directors also inferred that when profiling elite athletes' potential coaching abilities, some athletes were more 'suited' to work with youth academy athletes.

When adhering to GTM's strategy of identifying new lines of inquiry through the interplay of constant comparative data analytic procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), the additional delimited fields of youth performance AF and RU academies were considered as

environments to theoretically investigate. The following section outlines the signified importance presented by the literature on coach development to recognise the separate delimited fields (more frequently referred to as ‘contexts’ within the coaching literature) of elite adult and youth performance settings. Doing so also affirms the value for the project to extend its line of enquiry in this direction.

### **5.1.1 Importance of coaching contexts (or fields)**

Analysis on coach development and coaching efficacy/expertise has most frequently been conducted by psychologically driven studies (sections 3.1.2 - 3.1.3). Consequently, the term ‘context’ has been ubiquitously applied to denote ‘the unique settings in which coaches endeavour to improve athletic outcomes’ (Côté & Gilbert, 2009, p.314). Lyle (2002) initially defined two coaching contexts of participation and performance. Trudel and Gilbert (2006) extended this by defining recreational, developmental and elite sports contexts. The significance of recognising the context for defining coaching efficacy/expertise has thereby been affirmed by the literature (Côté, 2006; Côté, Young, North & Duffy, 2007; Erickson et al., 2007; Hassanin & Light, 2014; Lyle, 2002; Sullivan, Paquette, Holt & Bloom, 2012; Turner et al., 2012) because an ‘appreciation of these settings is critical to understanding effective coaching’ (Côté & Gilbert, 2009, p.314). Each context is considered to significantly shape the psycho-social and physiological aspects, needs and goals of the athletes, which in turn, require coaches to respond accordingly (Côté, 2006; Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Cushion, 2007; Cushion & Jones, 2014; Harvey, Cushion, Pope & Muir, 2013; Jones & Wallace 2005). This means that youth development and youth performance coaches are seen to require different knowledge and skill sets when compared to elite performance coaches (Côté et al., 2007; Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Mallett & Côté, 2006; Sullivan et al., 2012). Hence,

the criteria employed to categorise effective or expertise youth performance coaches needs to reflect the diverse demands which youth coaches are subject to (Côté & Gilbert, 2009).

Yet I contend that although the term ‘context’ is a valuable and insightful consideration, the term itself is judged to overlook the significance of the power dynamics and socio-cultural impact which coaches are also subject to (Chesterfield et al., 2010; Jones, 2007; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b). Informed by the results of iteration one, I have replaced the term ‘context’ and instead have applied the term ‘field’ throughout the remainder of the thesis for which a short justification is now provided.

Bourdieu’s (1990, 1998a, 1998b; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) concept of field enables AF and RU youth performance domains to be regarded as semi-autonomous social spaces that are situated within both the larger social spaces of each sport. Importantly, field also accommodates recognition of the individualised social space of each club (see figure seven, section 4.4, p.112). Indeed, the senior directors emphasised how ‘their own’ clubs possessed ‘their own’ distinct identity which separated them from other clubs in regards to how they practiced in their own playing and coaching philosophies. Within iteration one, Oliver noted this point in particular when explaining some of the underpinning decisions for appointing a head coach (or as Oliver calls ‘manager’):

...another part is driven by the kind of culture that you want to adopt. I think the clubs that I admire are the clubs that have a philosophy that runs through the club. So the way the first team play and the way the reserve team play, the way the reserve team play is the way the academy play and so then you’re looking for a manager who fits that philosophy and vision... (Oliver)

As can also be identified from Oliver’s statement, each field of each club and its academy was not entirely autonomous however. The boundaries of each club’s delimited fields can therefore be considered as ‘malleable’, occasionally coalescing with one another by virtue of their location within the overarching field of their respective sport (Martin, 2003; Swartz, 1998). As Wacquant (1992, p.18) detailed, ‘historical dynamism’ affects the cultural

norms which arise within each field. It is this 'historicity' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.102) which is the basis of how capital is defined within the respective field. Each field has agents situated within them who practice their own struggles and contestation of power (Bourdieu, 1990). Yet the species of capital which agents employ to legitimise their power is variable and dependent on the value which the field places on specific species of capital and practices: 'capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.101). Therefore, as the existing literature on coach development and coach efficacy/expertise has already identified, coaches practicing within specific fields are required to possess specific knowledge whilst practicing in a manner relevant for each field. This means that each coaching field has different social expectancies (i.e. coaching and playing philosophies as well as age appropriate practices) which therein makes capital specific to that field.

The significance of academies reprising as semi-autonomous delimited fields within the fields of each club and their respective sport, provoked me to explore this aspect of the career pathway elite athletes negotiated when transitioning into a post-athletic high-performance coaching role. Indeed, as Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p.100) affirmed, the task of research is to identify by 'various means' the effect and limits of field which are 'situated at the point where the effects of the field cease'. Thereby the same research questions of the first iteration were extended into an academy field by sampling academy directors who also facilitated the 'fast-track' pathway by accommodating current elite athletes as academy coaches or by employing former elite athletes in post-athletic academy coaching roles.

Similar to the findings reported by Erickson and colleagues (2007), the senior directors also strategically manoeuvred athletes into coaching roles within community departments whilst they were contracted as professional athletes. Sampling the managers of community departments, however, was not judged to be necessary in meeting the project's

overarching objective; since community departments were not seen as the field of destination for individuals' post-athletic coaching roles, but only a partial route into the fields of youth performance or senior elite performance.

### **5.1.2 Overview of literature on AF and RU academies**

An overview of the literature locating its analysis on the fields of youth RU academies showed a number of studies have addressed the topics of: youth RU athletes sustaining injury (Haseler, Carmont & England, 2010; McIntosh, McCrory, Finch & Wolfe, 2010; *inter-alia*); the physiological and anthropometric characteristics of high-performance youth RU athletes (Duthie, Pyne & Hooper, 2003) and; cognitive functioning for tactical decision making (Passos et al., 2008). There was, however, a limited amount of sociologically driven material concerning coach development or coach behaviours associated with youth performance RU coaches.

Light and Kirk's (2000) study on the culture behind the social reproduction and reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity within a male Australian high school rugby team was nevertheless a sociologically driven study. Although the high school team under analysis was not directly affiliated to a professional RU club, Light and Kirk (2000) referred to the social role which the coaches played in reproducing and symbolically imposing hegemonic masculinity.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, Light and Kirk (2000, p.167) acknowledged how all of the coaches had returned back to coach the school team after they had previously competed as

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<sup>37</sup> Although Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) recognise the term hegemonic masculinity has adopted various meanings within the social sciences since its conception in the 1980's (e.g. Connell, 1982), Light and Kirk (2000) applied the term to represent a hierarchically gendered ideology that promoted 'masculine' values of pain tolerance and aggression over other traits considered as 'feminine'.



athletes for the same team:

There was a history of outstanding players going on to higher education and returning to the school to teach and coach. Gordon, the coach of the firsts in 1997, had played in the 1<sup>st</sup> XV at TBS (The Brisbane School [pseudonym]), captained the Australian schoolboys on a successful tour of the UK, represented Queensland and returned to the school as a physical education teacher and coach. Gordon's full time coaching staff had also been former members of TBS firsts and this process of players returning to coach and teach played a significant part in the reproduction of a particular form of masculinity at the school.

Although the topic of coach development pathways was not the focus of their study, Light and Kirk (2000) identified the pathway between athlete and coach to be present within the field of the specific high school team.

The social-cultural role of coaches' practice within a RU youth academy has also been conceptually analysed by others. In particular, Manley (2012) along with Manley and colleagues (2012, 2016) drew upon Foucauldian concepts of surveillance, panopticism and docility to theorise the practices of coaching staff. It was observed here that the youth academy coaches discursively employed strategies so that youth athletes enhanced their own self-disciplinary techniques in order to improve as athletes and as individuals. These studies also investigated the practices within an AF youth academy environment and in so doing found similar results. In contrast to RU however, AF youth academies have received a greater focus of scholarly analysis on the practices which coaches have employed, along with the developmental routes which have been taken. A number of these studies (Cushion & Jones, 2001, 2006, 2014) have drawn upon Bourdieusian concepts of field, habitus, capital and symbolic violence to conceptualise coaches' practices for legitimising their authority and power over the youth players. Although the literature in this area has enhanced the field's understanding on the social configurations and power dynamics at play within academy fields, they have still nonetheless primarily captured data in a coach-centric orientation. As will be demonstrated, in a manner which reflected the senior club directors, academy directors also utilised their positions of power to systematically promote coaching practices

and cultural norms by supporting the ‘fast-track’ elite athlete to high-performance coach pathway.

### **5.1.3 Research aims of iteration 2**

The project’s second iteration sought to extend analysis on the two research questions that were initially addressed within iteration one. The only differences were that these research questions were directed to academy directors and tailored specifically to address the issues pertaining to the fields of youth performance RU and AF as well as their specific clubs’ academy fields. The italicised text within the below questions illustrates the additional elements in order to make them ever more specific to an academy field.

- How and what type of coaching knowledge *relevant to an academy field* was acquired during a competitive-athletic career?
- What were the social processes for how elite athletes negotiated a ‘fast-track’ transition into a post-athletic high-performance coaching role *within the academy field*?

## **5.2 Method**

### **5.2.1 Procedure**

The iteration extended the conduct of the Straussian GTM and abductive research strategy. Thereby the study repeated the same data collection method of semi-structured open-ended interviews as the first iteration. The same participant recruitment and reliability procedures undertaken within the first iteration were also applied. To avoid too much repetition, only an outline of the additional procedures specific to this iteration are provided.

Although the same ethical conditions were transposed from the first iteration (i.e. anonymity and the opportunity of the participants to complete transcript member checking), separate ethical consent was obtained from the same HE Ethics Board as iteration one. Contrasting to iteration one, however, the completion of a pilot study was not considered necessary on the basis that the first iteration had sensitised the researcher to the field's etiquette, language and norms for the purposes of achieving rich data. Participant recruitment was once again undertaken through employing multiple strategies (Harvey, 2010). Letters of invitation were sent either by email or by post to 64 prospective participants whose academies were part of professional clubs which competed in top two AF leagues of England (n=44) and the top two English RU leagues (n=20). The same letter of invitation template for iteration one was used with some minor amendments of content made in order for it to directly relate to the current study (appendix E). The letters of invitation clearly stated the study's aims and that any prospective participant had to meet the study's sampling criteria of: 1) currently be in a position central to the recruitment process of employing academy coaching staff, and; 2) available to complete an interview before a set date. Participants were invited to take part in the study by selecting their preference for conducting a semi-structured open-ended interview with the researcher either face-to-face or over the telephone.

Eight participants were recruited by responding to the letters of invitation. Similar to iteration one, the remaining three participants were recruited through my own professional networks which consisted of research associates based at other UK universities. None of the academy directors were affiliated to the same clubs of the senior directors who participated in the first iteration. Data collection was conducted towards the end of the 2012/13 season and over the entirety of the 2013/14 season. Nine face-to-face and two telephone interviews were conducted. Interviews lasted between 24 minutes and 61 minutes (mean = 44.63 minutes,  $\pm 13.49$ ).

Interview structure and questioning was based upon the central themes of iteration

one: the participant's own background and their current role within their academies; how they identified and recruited academy coaches, along with; the advantages and limitations for appointing athletes as academy coaches who had represented their senior team. Once again, probing enabled the participants to expand upon topics and allowed me as a researcher to elicit further information (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Interviews were once again audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by myself. These were returned electronically to each participant within ten working days for participant member checking to be completed (Carlson, 2010). Only two participants returned their transcripts with minor grammatical amendments made to some of their responses.

### **5.2.2 Participants**

A total of 11 white British male participants were recruited, seven within AF and four within RU. At the time of interview, seven of the participants' job titles were 'Academy Manager' or 'Academy Director'. The four remaining participants' job titles were: Head of Player Development; Assistant Academy Manager and Coach Developer; Assistant Academy Manager and Head of Education and Welfare, and; Academy Head Coach<sup>38</sup> (table six, p.129). For ease and clarity, the participants are collectively referred to as 'Academy Directors'<sup>39</sup>. This is because all 11 participants confirmed that they met the sampling criteria on the basis that at the time of interview, one of their central responsibilities was to recruit academy coaching staff as they occupied a position on the academy management board.

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<sup>38</sup> Although the letters of invitation were addressed to Academy Managers, in some cases the Academy Managers distributed the invitations to their colleagues who then responded and accepted the invitation to participate in the study. Only individuals who confirmed that they met the sampling criteria were interviewed.

<sup>39</sup> Complying with the ethical agreements of the study, pseudonyms have once again been used when referring to individual participants and their respective clubs.

Gareth disclosed during the interview that he even occupied a position on his club's senior management board and therefore had a central role in recruiting head coaches for the senior men's team as well.

Since iteration one identified the importance of the senior directors' previous athletic backgrounds on constructing their perceptions on the roles of coaches, coaching efficacy and coach development, table six presents the characteristics of the sample. Included are whether the participants had an elite competitive athletic background. In contrast to the senior directors, the majority of the academy directors had not been a professional athlete in their respective sports. Table six also illustrates that seven of the 11 academy directors continued to coach an academy team alongside performing as an academy director. This meant all participants had attained their NGB's coaching qualifications at a minimum of level four (see figures five [p.77] and six [p.77] for the FA's and RFU's respective coach qualification structures, section 3.4). The participants had been employed by their club's academies over a range of four to 21 years in either their current role or in a previous academy coach role. Some of the academy directors had also been teachers at high schools (Gareth), further education (Lawrence) or higher education institutions (Quentin), and had therefore accumulated a range of vocational and educational qualifications relevant to these occupations. In comparison to the senior directors, where the majority of the participants had a competitive athletic background, only Dexter, Uri and Finley within the present sample had once been competitive professional athletes (table six). As will be detailed, the participants were able to outline the limitations and difficulties encountered by elite athletes who transitioned into academy coaching roles. This was a consequence of their extensive experiences of practicing within elite sport and/or the youth performance academy fields as either elite athletes, academy coaches and as academy directors.

**Table 6 Iteration two sample pseudonyms, characteristics and background information**

| <b>Sport</b> | <b>Pseudonym</b> | <b>Level of Senior Club</b> | <b>Club Pseudonym</b>    | <b>Job Title</b>  | <b>Ex-professional athlete</b> | <b>Current Practicing Academy Coach</b> |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Football     | Dexter           | Premier League              | Eden City FC             | Head of Player Development                                  | ✓                              | ✓                                       |
|              | Quentin          | Premier League              | Bridge Town United FC    | Assistant Academy Manager and Head of Education and Welfare | ✗                              | ✓                                       |
|              | Gareth           | Premier League              | West Diamonds FC         | Academy Director  | ✗                              | ✗                                       |
|              | Uri              | Premier League              | South Avon United FC     | Academy Director  | ✓                              | ✗                                       |
|              | Finley           | Premier League              | Severn Albion FC         | Academy Manager   | ✓                              | ✓                                       |
|              | Ian              | Championship                | East Riding Rovers FC    | Coach Developer and Assistant Academy Manager               | ✗                              | ✗                                       |
|              | Jerome           | Championship                | Itchen Rovers FC         | Academy Manager   | ✗                              | ✓                                       |
| Rugby        | Liam             | Premiership                 | Derwent Swans Rugby Club | Academy Manager   | ✗                              | ✓                                       |
|              | Isaac            | Premiership                 | Wallside Rugby Club      | Academy Head Coach  | ✗                              | ✓                                       |
|              | Cameron          | Championship                | Deeside Rugby Club       | Academy Manager   | ✗                              | ✗                                       |
|              | Lawrence         | Championship                | Speybridge Rugby Club    | Academy Manager   | ✗                              | ✓                                       |

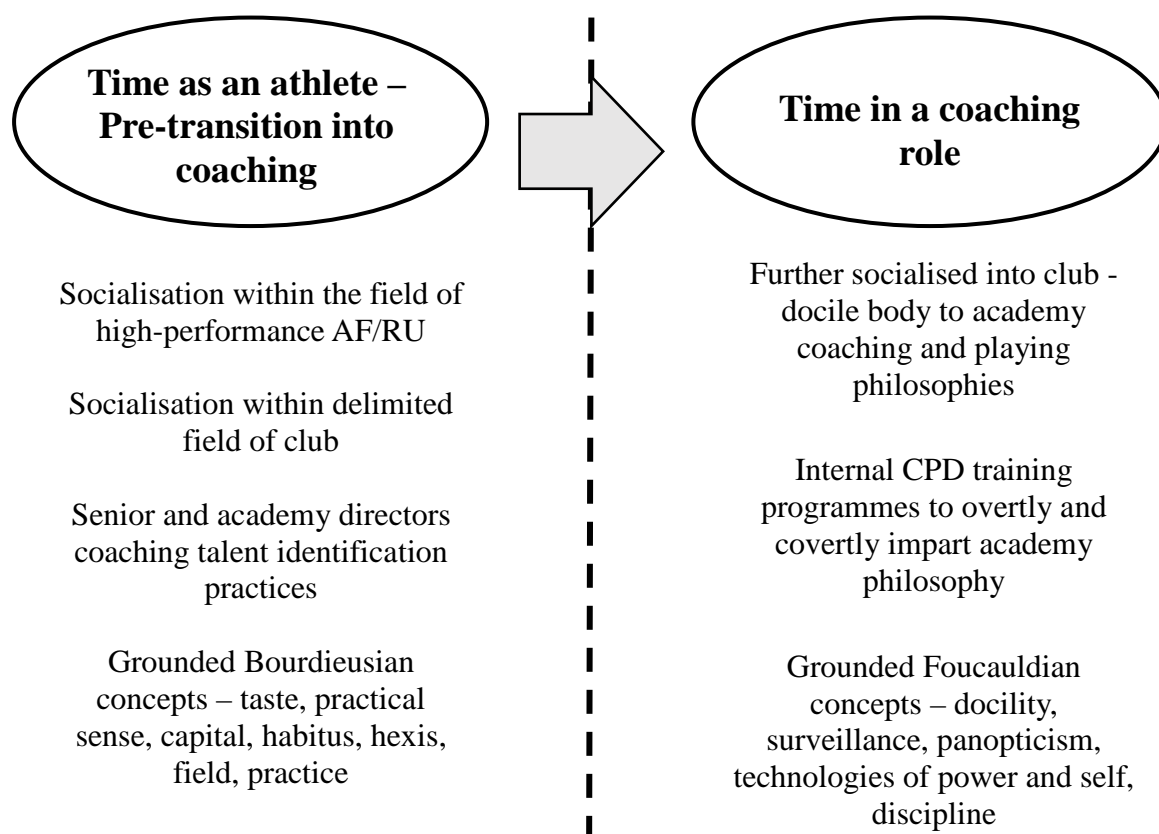
### **5.2.3 Data analysis**

Continuation of the Straussian GTM and abductive research strategy was employed throughout the iteration's data analysis. A result of the first iteration's data revealed the value of Bourdieu's theoretical framework to conceptualise the social process for the phenomena, was that Bourdieu's concepts acted as sensitising concepts (Bowen, 2006) which influenced the direction of the current iteration in respect of the questions posed and the subsequent initial interpretation of data analysis. By using the computer software programme of QSR\*NVivo 10 (QSR International, UK), abductive analysis against extant literature and the themes and concepts which emerged from the first iteration was conducted. During this phase, the data only partially aligned to Bourdieu's concepts. It is through this process whereby Foucauldian concepts were grounded within the data. The proceeding section outlines exactly how these two theoretical frameworks were both grounded within the data.

## **5.3 Results**

Similar to iteration one, academy directors profiled their respective club's senior elite athletes' potential coaching talent based on their practical sense and the embodied species of capital relevant to the delimited field of the individual clubs. This meant that Bourdieu's concepts were grounded in the data and can be applied to explain why particular elite athletes were drawn through into academy coaching roles. During the simultaneous process of data collection and analysis, however, the abductive re-reading of data discovered the value of Foucault's theoretical framework to conceptualise how the academy managers discursively employed strategies for shaping coach learning of their clubs' current and former elite athletes once commencing the transition of drawing these athletes through into academy

coaching roles. The discussion of results therefore is split into two distinct sections which figure eight provides a visual illustration of.



**Figure 8 Social processes theoretical summary for the career transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach**

The discussion begins by identifying how academy directors profiled high-performance athletes' personal dispositions in a manner which reflected the practices of the senior directors. This component of the discussion is written in a manner as if data were deductively analysed with Bourdieu's concepts. The second part of the discussion presents the juncture whereby Foucault's concepts emerged from the data and have therefore been applied to the data in order to conceptualise how the academy directors strategically used internal continual professional development (CPD) programmes to shape the learning and coaching methods of coaches who had once been and/or continued to be competitive high-performance athletes.



Academy directors initially exerted their own power and then diffused this across the academy to further enforce their clubs' coaching philosophies for the maintenance and governance of their respective club's identity. This was undertaken continuously through mentorship schemes in addition to CPD so that the incoming coaches' knowledge could be discursively developed over a prolonged period. This social process contrasted to the actions of the senior directors who were recorded to immediately release and then replace senior team head coaches if performances were not satisfactory. As Foucault's conceptualisation of power contrasts to Bourdieu's, a summative critique of the two theories has been presented within a concluding theoretical memo (section 5.6) which contextualises the concepts that have then acted as sensitising concepts (Bowen, 2006) for the third and final iteration.

## **5.4. Discussion**

### **5.4.1 The 'cultural governor' role of an academy director**

A significant feature which influenced both the academy directors' decisions for appointing academy coaches was the amount of autonomy they each possessed in managing their academies. For appointing academy coaches, the positions and roles of the academy directors within the overall club structure and the influence senior club directors had on the academies' playing philosophies (playing strategy) and coaching philosophies (coaching strategy) is an important theme which initially emerged from iteration one and became ever more prominent here. It is outlining this theme which the discussion commences with.

The position of each academy as a delimited field within the field of their respective clubs (section 5.1.1) was found to influence the roles of the academy directors and the amount of power they possessed. This affected the precise roles of the academy coaches in

the way that they were governed to practice in their coaching output. The ability of academy directors to govern coaches' individual and collective practices also influenced the coach recruitment strategies. In addition to this, the influence of recent policy and legislation that had been introduced by the respective NGBs and other structures (i.e. Premier League) had resulted in academy coaches' roles becoming more accountable to not only the overall club culture but also the respective fields' policies.<sup>40</sup> The academy directors were the individuals who mediated between making sure the academy adhered to the fields' policies and the overall club culture. In most cases, the overarching club culture was hierarchically imposed by the clubs' senior directors and first team coaching staff (Cruickshank et al., 2013; Slack & Parent, 2006). Gareth's explanation of where his position as Academy Director sat within his overall club was indicative of the rest of the participants' positions across AF and RU:

Ok, so my responsibilities in addition to leading policy, strategy, management and organisation, in short: I suppose be the spokesperson for the academy internally and externally, liaise with all of the other key stakeholders so including Chief Exec', first team manager, other department heads. So that is sort of a brief summary of my role, managing the academy's budget as well falls under my own remit of responsibility... in addition to obviously the policy and strategy. One of my, I suppose areas is appointment of staff and that's done in association with colleagues... My privilege is to engage with all of those areas. (Gareth)

As Gareth's position identified, the academy directors did not arbitrate their academy values to the same degree as the senior directors (section 4.3.1). Instead, academy directors practiced what has been conceptualised here as 'cultural governors' rather than arbiters of taste or cultural custodians like the senior directors. Academy directors considered a significant feature of their role was to promote and govern the academy to practice in a manner which reproduced their club's playing and coaching philosophy. Reflecting the findings from iteration one, the academies' playing philosophies represented some of the

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<sup>40</sup> Such policies are the Premier Leagues' Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP) which was introduced in 2011 for professional AF clubs to adhere to. The equivalent policy for RU is the RFU's Elite Player Development Group (EPDG). The significance of these policies for how academy directors operated the management of their academies, including coach recruitment, is outlined further in section 5.3.2.

clubs' collective identities. For a smaller proportion of academy directors, the coaching philosophies were considered to be a feature of their club's collective identities. Lawrence's explanation highlighted how both a playing and coaching philosophy was established within his academy after he was asked to describe the relationship between the academy and senior team in respect of whether his academy operated autonomously:

Not really, the style of play, so the playing philosophy is very similar. What Trevor (DoR) and Bob (Head Coach) are trying to achieve with the first team is very similar to what we are trying to achieve with our age group teams at under eighteens, under sixteens. That's necessarily not been a deliberate thing, it's the way it's come about. If Trevor was a very long way from my own playing philosophy, then I'd probably have to shift a little bit because it would not be good preparing the under eighteens to be one type of player when the first team Director of Rugby and the Head Coach want a different type of player. The way that it's happened, they sit quite nicely with our playing philosophies. They coach the first team differently you know, they're very experienced players, they coach them differently to how we coach the academy guys but the underlying philosophies of making them [athletes] make decisions, making them self-reliant, all of those types of things is pretty much embedded in both groups. And he [first team DoR] wants that in the first team squads so we've got to develop it within the academy boys to feed through. (Lawrence)

Lawrence's above quote furthermore emphasises how each academy constituted as a delimited field within the field of their clubs as shown in figure seven (section 4.4, p.112). Lawrence and Uri were two in particular who detailed how they 'governed' their academy's playing and coaching philosophies within their clubs in order to reflect their club's overarching identities. Quoting them at length helps situate the context in which they practiced:

So myself and the other full time academy staff sat down and talked about what we want, talked with the Director of Rugby, Trevor, about what he wants ultimately in players. And we talked about what we felt what our job was and what role we play in developing the young guys in the full-time academy. And once we got an understanding of what we wanted to be, so Trevor wants decision makers who are self-reliant and can cope with, you know, he calls it [when] the 'bombs are going off', when the pressure is really high, they [athletes] know how to think clearly and make really good decisions; to fulfil that in the full-time academy guys then naturally we want to start developing them in that way so that when they feed up through the system that they come up into. So probably driven by the top, what Trevor really wants, a little bit of my own personal philosophy about the ways you should teach or coach with some input from the other academy staff. So a bit of an amalgamation

of everything really. (Lawrence)

...that philosophy South Avon United FC always had a certain way to play and the fans would say oh we want to see them play on the floor, we want to see it played, you know, we want to see creative players, we want to see flair. So that was always the South Avon United FC style if you like. Some would say how about putting winning into it, well I think that obviously comes a bit later on. But that was Wayne (ex-manager from 1960's) and that's how it really started for me and *so I've really just carried on that sort of tradition*. When I took over the academy it was always try and play with that certain style you know, everyone had to try and pass the ball in a controlled way rather than hoof it down the pitch, playing through midfield to the front and playing with a little bit of style and swagger if you like, a lot of one and two touch movements and passing and that was all Wayne really that set that philosophy. We have refined it, we've written it down, we have analysed it a bit and taken it right down to the very young babies in the groups but that's where for me the South Avon United FC philosophy began *and all the time I've been here I've just tried to follow it through and improve it as year on year on*. (Uri, emphasis added)

The relationship between each club's senior team and academy was dictated by a number of structural influences. In some cases, and akin to Uri's club, these were based on traditional values that 'the club' had always upheld a particular playing philosophy. Hence Uri's club had a specific overarching identity based on this playing philosophy. In some other cases, which mirrored Lawrence's academy, the onset of professionalisation and internal club strategy had meant that these decisions had been centralised to senior directors who developed their academy objectives, philosophies and identities (Slack & Parent, 2006). In any case, the academy directors had to mediate between these structures in the running of the academies. The intermediary position which the academy directors occupied, in terms of creating an environment for coaches to achieve the objectives of developing academy athletes, but also governing their practices within the club's overall philosophy and structure, was summarised by Jerome:

...I suppose my responsibility is in term of trying to set the environment which people can then go and be creative and also work within a structure if you like, the Itchen Rovers FC way, and whatever terms you would like to call it. (Jerome)

The combined views of the academy directors depict a complex set of internal power

dynamics within each club that were largely driven by ideological structures. In addition to this were policies imposed onto the academies from external political structures (i.e. Premier League and RFU). These came in the form of additional levels of bureaucratisation as a consequence of professionalisation (Taylor & Garratt, 2010), which also affected the roles of academy directors themselves and the recruitment processes of appointing academy coaches. Finley and Uri respectively provided a detailed account on how their roles at their AF club's academy were directly influenced by the recently imposed policy of the Premier League's Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP):

Well basically there's the development programme in place for the academy, from the ages of seven up to the age of twenty-one. And obviously with the new EPPP coming into operation, that's a requirement, and I just *oversee* that and make sure that's operating correctly. (Finley, emphasis added)

Well I'm the Academy Director, I head the academy. I have responsibility through the players that come into the system from eight years of age to twenty-one years of age. So my whole role is to ensure that the programme works really in terms of coaches with groups, organisation, coaching programmes, *everyone is following the same philosophy of the club* you know in what we believe is right for young player development and to *oversee* that on a daily, weekly, monthly, yearly basis really. (Uri, emphasis added)

A full appraisal of the associated policies falls outside the scope of this project.<sup>41</sup> Yet the legislation of AF's EPPP and RU's equivalent, the Elite Player Development Group (EPDG)<sup>42</sup> was identified as a mechanism which shaped the appointment of academy coaches and thus contributed to the 'fast-track' coaching pathway. It is on this point whereby the academy directors emphasised that regardless of whether a prospective academy coach was an ex-elite athlete or not, they as academy directors could only appoint academy coaches if a set minimum level of formal coach accreditation had been attained. As Academy Manager

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<sup>41</sup> Please refer to the Premier League's (2015) EPPP website for further information on this policy.

<sup>42</sup> Please refer to the RFU's (n.d.) *The education guide for talented young rugby players* for further information on this policy.

of an AF academy, Finley was one participant who affirmed this point:

Well obviously, again, regulations indicates that the coaches who are taking up say the lead phase coach, coaches of the different phases, they all have to be, the nines to fives to sixteens, they need to be UEFA B. The youth phase [16-18 years], they have to be 'A' licence coaches and the same with the professional phase [18-21 years]... I mean at the end of the day it's up to the individual but regardless of whether he's been in the first team and played a lot of games he has still has to go through a pathway which will basically give him the qualification to come into the academy. Without that he can't come in. (Finley)<sup>43</sup>

As will be outlined later, the academy directors, including Finley, did circumvent these policy restrictions by employing strategies to accommodate their clubs' current or former athletes as academy coaches. It is on the theme of how academy directors profiled competitive-athletes' prospective coaching skills and how current or former athletes were drawn through into academy coaching roles which the discussion now turns to.

#### **5.4.2 Drawing current or former athletes through into academy coaching roles**

The academy directors independently recognised the value of drawing either current or former elite athletes through into academy coaching roles. It was conceded by the AF academy directors that current or former elite athletes did not always have the necessary minimum coaching qualifications required to work in academies as lead phase coaches. Irrespective of this, however, academy directors were still receptive towards recruiting their club's current or former athletes as supportive academy coaches to work underneath the lead phase coaches. Liam as a RU academy director outlined how the equivalent RU academy

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<sup>43</sup> Please refer the FA's coach qualification structure and how this fits into the European (UEFA) accreditation in figure five (section 3.4, p.77).

policy was not as constraining in respect to who he recruited coaches within his academy:

*Alex: So do you have minimum standards for people who come in and help you guys coach regarding the formal qualifications, they've got to be level three, two?*

**Liam:** No not really, as long as they are a good person. You can get them through their coaching qualifications through time. What you can't buy is good people in terms of making them better because it's that old thing of leopards don't really change their spots. People, they'll change a little bit but you won't get a massive amount of change from someone on how they act and how they behave.

Like the senior directors, the academy directors' preference on profiling elite athletes as prospective coaches and their potential coaching ability was centred on 'taste' concerning agent's deportment and personal characteristics (Bourdieu, 1984). The value ascribed to personal characteristics and dispositions which Cameron placed on effective coaches was representative of the sample's views.

I place, I think what's much more important is the, is the interpersonal skills and the attitude of the coach... I think they've got to have a sense of humour, I think they've got to have a sense of humility, they've got to be open to learning and open to challenge. (Cameron)

The significance of individuals' habitus reflecting the clubs' values was also an important feature for academy directors in their recruitment strategies. Academy directors profiled their clubs' current competitive-athletes' prospective coaching capabilities in the same manner as the senior directors. Competitive-athletes who practiced within the same delimited field of each club provided an arena where direct observation of athletes' characteristics and personable dispositions were performed. In so doing, the academy directors subconsciously profiled elite athletes' characteristics and deportment when making a judgement on whether they had the 'appropriate' dispositions and habitus to become academy coaches. Gareth was representative of the sample as he acknowledged that he continually profiled elite athletes within his club's senior team as he undertook an "assessment of whether people fit into your culture over a period of time depending on the

key features you see in the way they are”.

The deportment and habitus of prospective coaches was perceived to ground the formation of a mutual level of trust (Kelly & Harris, 2010; Misztal, 1996). Elite athletes’ embodiment of the appropriate cultural values of the field, and of each club, was taken to mean an enhanced level of trust was reached in that incoming academy coaches would not only coach in the ‘appropriate’ way but also act in an ‘appropriate’ manner relevant to the club’s (field’s) expectations:

Yeah well so features of culture are the things that, the things we would we would expect the individual coach to *embody*. So you know we think that the interpersonal skills of the individual are key, whether that’s with players, with parents, with staff, with guests. (Gareth, emphasis added)

I think the people themselves are probably more important than the actual rugby skills, its good people who you can trust, they’ll get on with it, they’ll work hard. (Isaac)

Well I mean I look quite closely at interaction, personality... So they’ve [coaches] got to be engaging, they’ve got to be able to interact and they’ve got to have a sense of humour; they’ve got to have those things. As far as coaching goes you can teach people to become better coaches but they’ve got to be good people and they’ve got to be doing it for the right reasons. (Finley)

A mutual level of trust was taken to mean that the social order of how the academy practiced would be maintained without any disruption (Kelly & Harris, 2010; Misztal, 1996), and would therefore enhance the prospect of the academy producing talented athletes. This meant that academy directors’ preferred recruitment processes were to headhunt individuals instead of advertising. The individuals who were more favourably headhunted were either current or former elite athletes for their clubs. The extended extract taken from Cameron’s interview markedly illustrates this when he was asked why he headhunted his club’s current or former athletes for academy coaching roles:

**Cameron:** I guess we knew them, knew that they were trustworthy, knew them as people, knew that they were reasonably good coaches, knew that they had very much Deeside Rugby Club focussed on their mind and had sort of come through the



Deeside Rugby Club ranks one way or another. And I think that sort of relationship between the coaches, the chemistry between the coaches is really good. And I think them also understanding the Deeside Championship Rugby Club ethos has really been quite important.

*Alex: So when you say Deeside Rugby Club ethos, what exactly do you mean by that?*

**Cameron:** Well the way in which things are done; the culture within the club.

*Alex: Ok, is that again related to your coaching philosophies and how you play the game, or your coaching principles?*

**Cameron:** Yeah it's related to all of those things. Deeside Rugby Club is often described as being quote unquote an old fashioned club you know. What does that mean? Well what that means in our sense is that it's, it's a club which has been very successful but at the Championship level as you know over the years, but it's a club where people know each other pretty well, it's quite a tight knit community and bringing on people to coach at the academy level who understand what that sort of thinking, what that culture is like within the club has been quite important.

Prospective academy coaches having a shared habitus that brought a 'cultural fit'<sup>44</sup> with each academy shaped the ways in which the academy directors' implemented the recruitment procedures and appointment processes of academy coaches. Cameron inferred how recruitment processes of purposefully 'approaching' and 'persuading' former or current club athletes was indicative for his academy field: "Yeah it's probably word of mouth, so we don't advertise for coaches... I've sort of targeted people and approached them". Similarly, Dexter acknowledged that "very rarely are we going to bring someone in we don't know or [have] seen work". Such a practice was also reflected within iteration one, such as Keith's views on relying on social capital of personal networks to recruit head coaches (section 4.3.4). As a senior AF club director, Shaun also spoke about why his club did not advertise head coaching posts externally:

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<sup>44</sup> The term 'cultural fit' has been applied here as an extension of the findings derived from iteration one. See section 4.3.4 for how a cultural fit has been conceptualised on the basis of a shared habitus between the coach (agency) and club (structure) regarding playing philosophies.

Between the staff we try to target somebody. We don't like advertising. We don't like that at all. If you advertise you get every Tom, Dick or Harry. We know the people who apply for adverts, yeah it just isn't what we want. We will target the person that we want and approach them. (Shaun)

The preference of academy directors to mirror the senior directors' appointment processes of appointing current or former competitive-athletes as academy coaches by drawing them through their club structures was conceptualised as a doxic practice (see section 4.3.4). Liam continued to explain how this coaching pathway was symptomatic in his view of the field of RU:

...a lot of players will go into coaching through their clubs and you see that all across the country, all across the academies. Players are retiring and going straight into coaching the academy and then they're doing their qualifications while they are getting the experience. So obviously they've got the technical knowledge because they've been doing it at the forefront of the game but it's whether they've got that teacher capacity to actually pass it on. And what we've got, we've got a couple of coaches here who've gone straight into coaching from playing in the first team set up. (Liam)

Drawing current or former elite athletes through into academy coaching roles reflects the conclusions drawn from iteration one that in such recruitment practices, symbolic violence is imposed onto populations that do not practice within the elite men's performance fields of RU or AF (section 4.3.5).

Academy directors had formed their own practical sense on judging whether particular athletes had the appropriate dispositions for prospectively becoming effective academy coaches. Practical sense for coach talent identification was developed as a result of the academy directors' own practice within the field of elite sport as either a competitive athlete, or as a coach, and which once again reflected the practices of the senior directors. Academy directors own practical sense for identifying prospective coaching talent concerning whether athletes embodied the appropriate values and deportment to become academy coaches was acknowledged by the participants as hard to verbalise. This

furthermore emphasised their own judgements and practical sense having been formed at the subconscious level of their own habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; Christensen, 2009).

I think you just have a gut feeling, you just know someone... sometimes the person you know is the better person. (Ian)

...fundamentally I think we are looking for somebody who has got the right personal qualities and sometimes it is difficult to encapsulate that... (Gareth)

The benefits of appointing academy coaches who were either current or former elite athletes of the same club was conceptualised to centre upon the importance of a shared habitus and 'cultural fit'. Associated to this was the assumption that practice as an elite athlete within the field of elite sport and the delimited field of each individual club helped sensitise prospective academy coaches not only to the club's values but also a specifically defined athlete-centred coaching philosophy (Kidman, 2001, 2005; Kidman & Lombardo, 2010). It is the value of an athlete-centred philosophy and how the reproduction of this was culturally framed which the following section now covers.

#### **5.4.3 Culturally framed coaching roles: An athlete-centred philosophy**

In addition to being contextually bound by the political structures of legislation and policy, academy coaching roles were also culturally framed by the fields' ideological structures of club culture in which they practiced within (Cushion et al., 2012; Gilbert & Trudel, 2005). Although the academy directors were keen to emphasise how their academy's identity was distinct from others, their coaching philosophies all resembled having an athlete-centred coaching philosophy (Kidman, 2001, 2005; Kidman & Lombardo, 2010).

Yeah we do we have a culture, it's focussed on trying to ensure that players are in a

learning environment rather than in an overly prescriptive environment. So we have a coaching philosophy which is based a lot on trying to help the players learn themselves rather than ramming it down their throats. (Cameron)

Our philosophy is that its empowerment, it's got to be player led. So we encourage interaction between the coaches and the boys... We're keen at Severn Albion FC to have an empowerment approach right across the board so from the under nines up to under twenty-ones; we encourage the twenty-ones to challenge what we're asking them to do, what formations we are playing... we try and develop quite an open environment where we are moving away from I'm the coach you've got to listen to everything I'm saying, when I talk you don't talk, we, you know, we don't coach like that. (Finley)

The clear distinction made by the academy directors like Cameron and Finley on coaching philosophies as separate to playing philosophies was one which was not made by the senior directors. Each individual clubs' academy coaching philosophies all reflected Cameron and Finley's in the sense that an empowerment approach underpinned their practices (Jones, 2001; Kidman, 2001, 2005). It was an expectation of the academy directors that current and prospective academy coaches had to consent to and thereby reproduce their academy's philosophy of and for coaching throughout their own practices. This furthermore emphasised the importance placed on 'cultural fit' and why the doxic practice of drawing the club's current or former elite athletes through into academy coaching roles was promoted because of the assumed compliance towards adhering to the clubs' philosophies that was regularly referred to as 'buy in' (Potrac & Jones, 2009a). The significance of 'buy in' within the academy field was emphasised by Gareth:

I'd like to feel we create a culture, we create an unwritten approach to how we do things that rubs off on people and get them to hopefully support and agree with our approach and want to *buy into our culture*, and extend it and grow within it. (Gareth, emphasis added)

It must be noted, however, that current and former elite athletes did not always have what the academy directors considered to be an entirely appropriate coaching habitus for practicing within the delimited field of the academy. The academy directors were reflexive

about the difficulties they had previously encountered after appointing individuals who had negotiated the elite athlete to academy coach pathway. In some of these cases the academy coaches reproduced the same drills and exercises that they had been accustomed to as athletes within the senior performance field (Cushion et al., 2003). Therefore, although current or former elite athletes had elevated levels of embodied capital as a result of their athletic experiences, at the same time this also meant that the same individuals lost capital when entering into the delimited fields of academies as neophyte coaches. Jerome stated how he had encountered current or former competitive-athletes drawn through into his academy and that he judged such individuals at times to inappropriately coach his academy's athletes:

I think there's a preconceived idea sometimes that certainly from an ex-player's perspective... a lot of the time [they have] been led by who they've played for, who they've worked with, which have either inspired them or provided them with some experiences. And what you do get a little bit of is, oh, I always used to do this. Yeah but you did that and that was ten years ago though, Apple<sup>TM</sup> were making the big computers with the flipping backs on them like they were sixteen inches. They don't anymore, they make them about five millimetres thick. So in any industry you can't just keep going ok I did that ten years ago. People will always say the old phrase you know, you always do what you always did, you always get what you always had. And I think that's sometimes the issues with English football, we just replicate some of the stuff we used to do, well times have moved on. (Jerome)

Therefore, although the embodied experiences, knowledge and interpersonal skills current or former elite athletes brought with them to the role of an academy coach were valued by the academy directors, formal coaching qualifications were valued, to an extent, for developing coaching knowledge and practices. It is the theme of how academy managers interpreted coaching knowledge to be acquired by current or former competitive-athletes and how this contributed to their coach development which the discussion now presents.

#### **5.4.4 The value of explicit coaching knowledge accrued from formal coaching courses**

Unlike the senior directors, a competitive-athletic career on its own was not viewed by the academy directors to provide elite athletes with sufficient knowledge for effective coaching: “I don’t think the elite player background is enough to compensate for not having good technical knowledge or for not having good interpersonal skills and good coaching understanding” (Cameron). A common theme across the sample was the transition from elite athlete to academy coach was somewhat more problematic in contrast to how the senior directors viewed the career transition within a senior performance context: “if you’ve played five hundred games and you think that you can just walk in and coach people the game, then think again, you are barking up the wrong tree” (Jerome). This perception contrasted to the senior directors who based head coach appointments on agents’ accumulation of embodied cultural and symbolic capital accrued from an elite competitive-athletic career because this was seen as the driving mechanism for attaining player to coach respect (section 4.3.2). The academy directors placed more emphasis on academy coaches possessing enhanced levels of pedagogical knowledge which was assigned with greater institutionalised cultural capital. Formal coach education was considered a domain which introduced elite athletes to valuable pedagogical knowledge and thus providing them with the ability to convert the accumulated capital from a competitive-athletic career to a novice coaching role. Academy directors were recorded to proactively encourage current athletes to start their coaching qualifications. Quentin identified this as being commonplace within the elite sports field:

You’ll find now that players who are in the game will want to get their coaching qualifications whilst they are still playing. It doesn’t mean that they can go in straight away and lead a coaching session and lead a group but they’re thinking ahead.  
(Quentin)

As Quentin inferred, even if an elite athlete had attained their formal coach education qualifications, they were still expected to go through a coaching apprenticeship (Cassidy &

Rossi, 2006; Cushion et al., 2003) within the academy itself where the fields' specific values and beliefs were imparted furthermore. At this phase, irrespective of whether the incoming coach had a competitive-athletic background or not, all new academy coaches were observed, profiled and placed as assistant coaches:

...they won't go straight in, they will shadow, they will go with someone who has got a bit of experience, who's more experienced. That's for, that's really, that's management *unknowingly making a decision*, you just have a gut feeling that you have to put him with them (a senior coach). That time scale is basically managed by itself, its two weeks, six weeks, six months or whatever. (Ian, added emphasis)

Thereby although the formal coaching qualifications were valued by the academy directors in some regard, they still emphasised how the philosophies of the clubs should frame what knowledge was retained by the coaches.

I suppose when the coaches are going on these formal courses which have been put forward by the FA, the national body, it's something that you have to do. What I'm keen for them to do is obviously to do these courses then stand back and see how that can be integrated into the way we want to coach. (Finley)

As Finley highlighted, even if current or former elite athletes were working towards attaining their qualifications, there were some sceptical attitudes from the academy directors toward the overall impact coaching qualifications and formal sources of knowledge brought in respect of how this knowledge matched each clubs' own philosophy. The academy directors subsequently employed specific discursive strategies to steer coaches' development. These practices were culturally framed to how the academy directors governed their academy philosophies and therefore significantly shaped the coaching development of current or former elite athletes.

It is at this point of the data collection and analysis whereby the theme of academy directors employing discursive strategies of governance to promote particular coaching skills and knowledge was identified. Indeed, the themes emanating from the data signified how Foucauldian concepts of surveillance, panopticism and docility could be aligned to explain

this social process. Here, Foucault's theoretical framework highlighted the development of coaching knowledge to be culturally framed (Denison et al., 2015) more so than Bourdieu's framework. The theoretical memo taken during data analysis identifies this theoretical line of enquiry:

Theoretical Memo (inputted on 17 October 2013)

Academy directors do not seem to instantaneously dismiss academy coaches if performances are not satisfactory. This is unlike the senior directors. Before dismissing an academy coach, academy directors employ internal CPD programmes and support mechanisms to direct coaching practices. Continual **surveillance** and **monitoring** was conducted by the academy directors over the academy coaches. The perceived advantage of drawing through their club's current or former athletes into an academy coaching role seems to be that these individuals had already been socialised to the club philosophy. Each club's current or former elite athletes were therefore considered to be **docile bodies** in re-enacting the desired club philosophies or docile to the discursive strategies of internal CPD schemes.

It was considered that Bourdieu's theoretical framework was not judged to clearly conceptualise how those with power legitimise and govern their field's cultural norms other than through agency and structural subconscious practices. This meant that the data revealed the value of Foucault's conceptual framework to explain how dominant 'philosophies' were socially and culturally reproduced within the two substantive fields. Hence, Foucault's concepts were interpreted to depict with greater clarity and accuracy the intersubjective nature of the social processes academy directors employed for discursively shaping the development of incoming coaches' coaching knowledge and to reproduce 'their' clubs' philosophies.

Subsequently, from this point of the discussion, the data has applied Foucauldian concepts to theoretically conceptualise the theme of how academy managers used their academies' internal CPD programmes and their perceived advantages of drawing their clubs' current or former athletes through into coaching roles. In this respect, the discussion is written in a manner whereby the 'cart is placed before the horse', as the discussion suspends



a thorough overview of Foucault's work until the following theoretical memo (section 5.5).<sup>45</sup>

It is within the theoretical memo where Foucault's work is critically appraised against Bourdieu's. In so doing, the theoretical memo provides a platform which surmises the concepts identified within both iterations one and two, and which have been taken forward as sensitising concepts for the third and final iteration.

### **5.4.5 A Foucauldian conceptualisation for recruiting and developing coaches**

#### **5.4.5.1 Docile bodies**

Academy directors noted that a significant incentive for drawing their clubs' current or former elite athletes through into academy roles was that such individuals were perceived to have already internalised and invested in the club's values, ethos and culture. This meant that the academy directors considered their clubs' current or former athletes to be docile bodies (Foucault, 1972/1969, 1975) in respect of their perceived willingness to continue implementing their respective clubs' and academies' philosophies. In comparison to appointing external candidates, the process of drawing current or former athletes through into academy coaching roles was therefore a preferred discursive practice as it was viewed to help maintain the social order of the academies (Foucault, 1972/1969) and negate any micro-political tensions between academy staff concerning views towards coaching practices (see Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Potrac et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2013).

As has already been detailed, competitive-athletes' assumed internalisation (subjectivation) and embodiment (folding) of the club's values (regimes of truth) through their competitive-athletic histories provided academy directors with the perception of an

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<sup>45</sup> An introduction of Foucault's theoretical framework and some of the concepts of this has been made within the theoretical sensitivity phase (section 3.2.2).

enhanced level of trust: “So if you can’t trust someone, you don’t know what they are up to, and well, you can’t trust someone if you don’t know them. How’s that good for the kids?” (Quentin). The establishment of trust was based on the view that competitive-athletes had a ‘cultural fit’ with the club, meaning they would continue to reproduce the club values in their own coaching. This finding resonates with the conclusions drawn by Kelly and Harris (2010) when investigating the internal club relationships between AF managers and club directors in an elite adult performance field. Here, Kelly and Harris (2010, p.498) concluded the basis of trust was between these social actors was based upon a ‘mutual suspicion of ‘outsiders’ and dealing with people who are perceived as very different’. To relate this finding back to the present iteration, the strategic intention and preference of recruiting the clubs’ current or former athletes as academy coaches depicts how the academy directors conscientiously controlled the identities of the academy coaching staff by avoiding the recruitment of candidates considered as ‘outsiders’ to their clubs’ fields.<sup>46</sup> Such a theme represents how Foucault’s (1978/1976, 1984) technologies of power can be applied here to conceptualise the actions of the academy directors for regulating the coaching populations who enter ‘their’ clubs.

Moreover, the academy directors explained why they promoted and valued the strategic recruitment of individuals who had or continued to compete for the same club which their academies were part of. Drawing their club’s current competitive-athletes was a process that was considered to further socialise such a population to their respective academies’ and clubs’ coaching and playing philosophies in order to make their subsequent career transition into coaching more fluent.

I would be delighted in the future if we get to a point, and I’ve discussed this with the Chief Exec, if we get to point where we are growing our coaches; so ‘*our*’ coaches fill the vast majority of coaching roles in the club. I mean Grant who is

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<sup>46</sup> See Shaun’s statement in section 5.4.2 (p.141) on only headhunting coaches instead of externally advertising as well as Keith’s statement in section 4.3.4 (p.106) on why he targeted coaches he knew personally.

currently with the first team, you know, finished a playing career, coached the reserves and is now with the firsts. (Gareth, original emphasis)

The strategic yet informal placement of current competitive-athletes within the academies comprised an apprenticeship of coaching (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Cushion et al., 2003; Jones, et al., 2003). Gareth's ambition for his club to 'grow' their 'own coaches' signifies the discursive social processes the academy directors exercised for regulating the population of 'their' clubs' coaching workforce. This is in addition to the technologies of power the academy directors employed to strategically, yet informally, promote certain coaching values and knowledge once coaches were brought into the clubs (Denison, 2010).

As the above theoretical memo alluded to, if the current or former athletes did not become docile bodies by consenting to the desired philosophy, the actual conduct of dismissing an academy coach was not as quickly practiced by the academy directors in comparison to the senior performance context (e.g. Kelly & Harris, 2010; Occhino et al., 2013). This was because the academy directors imposed more technologies of power by means of both hierarchical and lateral surveillance and panopticism (Foucault, 1972/1969, 1975) for governing academy coaches' behaviours and practices so the coaches would conform to coach in an 'appropriate' way. It is outlining how academy directors employed these discursive strategies which the following section covers.

#### **5.4.5.2 Technologies of power: Surveillance and panopticism**

Irrespective of whether academy coaches had once been or continued to be competitive-athletes for their club, if they did not become docile bodies and maintain a level of discipline in consenting to coaching in line with the academy philosophy (or discursive

regimes of truth in Foucauldian terms), the academy directors employed technologies of power to govern the coaches' practices instead of instantly dismissing coaches. Gareth explained these social processes:

We will intervene if necessary. So we'll do, both Alistair, as the Coach Developer and Rodney as the Head Coach, will intervene with coaches and say 'actually I don't think that's the right way, I think you need to think about this'. We'll comment on their coaching and we run in-service training events which are certainly engineered and designed to be thought provoking. (Gareth)

CPD reprised as technologies of power for transforming, shaping and framing the practices and knowledge of the academy coaches. Indeed, disciplinary technologies of power that reprised as educational regimes of practice (Foucault, 1991) formed a central part of the academy directors' roles: "I think it's been one of the big parts of the job, I think, is up-skilling coaches" (Isaac). The academy directors therefore were also responsible for devising their academies' own internal and informal coaching CPD programmes, designed to continually govern, and 'up-skill' the academy coaching workforce. Ian highlighted how this aspect was part of his role:

I look after the whole coaching basically. I look after all of the coach development so I organise courses for them and make sure the courses are relevant to what they are going on, looking after the CPD, make sure all of that is up to date, and then obviously doing some coaching as well. (Ian)

The delivery of each club's internal coaching CPD programmes and the messages imparted within them were formal and overt in one sense, but covert and subversive in another. As a formal and overt technology of power, Finley was one of the academy directors who clearly indicated that the purposes of coaching CPD programmes were to explicate the message of the academy's philosophy and subjugate the coaches furthermore to these sub-cultural messages: the means of correct training (Jones & Denison, 2016; Taylor, Potrac, Nelson, Jones & Groom, 2015; Zehntner & McMahon, 2013):

...the coaches that work in the system, who work in the academy, obviously they

know the philosophy you know, through watching the senior coaches, watching myself and then obviously through the presentations that I've made to the coaches in relation to the way we want to do it you know. (Finley)

The delivery of internal CPD programmes also meant that these messages would be governed so they remained within the club and consistent to the academy identity of either a coaching or playing philosophy. Quentin described how this affected his club:

Well the majority of the coaching CPD is internal so that means that the coaching philosophy is you know, the place is stinking of it you know. What I mean it's ingrained... You have to be ingrained in the club philosophy. Now in that philosophy you've got your own opinions and own way of working and things like that, of course you have, but it's still got to come back to the way *the club* want children to be coached and the philosophy that's expected, and that's done a lot through internal CPD. (Quentin, original emphasis)

The academy directors stressed, however, that in the case of an academy coach who was considered to not be performing effectively, internal CPD was not intended to be viewed as a disciplinary mechanism for overt punishment. Instead, internal CPD was viewed to be an arena where best practice could be shared. Nonetheless, it was clear that the messages encompassed within internal CPD were discursive, intended to frame and control the academy coaches' knowledge and practices so that they would continue to reproduce the clubs' philosophies through overt and covert techniques of surveillance and governance.

Each academy's internal coaching CPD programmes were not the only technology of power for governing academy coaches' practices. Academy directors continually governed all of the coaching practices through their immediate presence at coaching sessions in what Foucault (1979) conceptualised as panopticism, a hierarchical form of surveillance.<sup>47</sup> Academy directors observing coaching practices was not undertaken just to profile the development of the athletes but also the dispositions and practices of the coaches'

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<sup>47</sup> Please refer back to section 3.2.2 for a detailed explanation of panopticism.

behaviours. Liam detailed how he continually observed academy coaches' delivery to make sure his club's coaching philosophy was implemented:

...we are pretty big in coaching through games, Games Sense, TGfU, that type of thing... I'm a coach who wants interaction, I want the players to be questioned, I want learning to take place. So if someone is standing there for an hour shouting and screaming and giving them all of the answers and telling them to do things, I'd be questioning them why they are doing it. (Liam)

As Academy Head Coach, Isaac explained how his Academy Manager continuously governed the language which he and the rest of the academy coaches used during their coaching practices: "You just have (Academy Manager name) walking behind you saying you said don't there, you said don't again, don't say don't" (Isaac). Surveillance, and in particular panopticism, was a form of disciplinary power that was practiced as an initial starting point directly by the academy directors but one which also then diffused power across the academy. These strategies resembled Foucault's (1979, 1983) conception of power; one that is based upon a relational basis whereby power itself is not held by a one authoritative group but is instead omnipresent and therein predisposed to tension balances (Dean, 2010; Faubion, 1998). As previously noted within the theoretical sensitivity chapter (section 3.2.2), Foucault (1972/1969, 1978/1976) regarded power to be capable of not only disciplinary possibilities but also productive possibilities. Power possessing productive outcomes was identified within the panoptic practice of academy directors and their internal coaching CPD programmes. The issue of the academy culture which the academy directors governed came to light once again.

It was considered impractical and unfeasible for academy directors to micro-manage and directly observe the entire academy coaching staff on a session by session basis. Therefore, the directly imposed means of surveillance and technologies of power which the academy directors were able to practically employ were limited. To overcome this, in addition to governing a culture which promoted and sustained both coaching and playing

philosophies, the academy directors also discursively governed a culture where CPD was a pervasive feature and normalising process within their academies: “We’ve always had in my time here, I think coach education has been a strong feature of the West Diamonds’ Football Club academy” (Gareth). CPD was also regarded as a method to strategically negotiate and govern the development of a culture whereby all academy coaching staff felt they had the confidence and power to critically feed-back to one and another on each other’s coaching practice in a manner which laterally diffused power and the means of surveillance across the academy (Foucault, 1978/1976).

I think the CPD is bigger than that. I think it’s the everyday, it’s how you deal with people, have you got an environment that is [where] you are prepared to say to someone: look, I’m not too sure that you are doing that right and have you thought about doing it this way? And you get that open discussion, people get quite open to, ok, I see what you are saying. (Jerome)

In this sense, the interrogation of data resulted in it being aligned to Foucault’s work as it explains how the academy directors governed what they regarded as a productive and collaborative culture, whereby each active academy coach self-governed their own coaching practices but also the practice of their colleagues. This lateral surveillance (Andrejevic, 2005; Wood, 2003) manifested itself in the form of peer mentorship as the diffusion of power and the centrality of surveillance strategies was spread across the academy environment whereby coaches socially controlled and monitored the practices of colleagues (Manley, 2012; Manley et al., 2012, 2016). In such a light, the academy coaches were perceived to have become docile bodies toward the regimes of truth of their club and academy, and in so doing, governed themselves in a manner conceptualised by Foucault (1988a) as technologies of self in order to practice in what was considered as following the ‘academy philosophy’. Dexter referred to the importance of academy coaches employing their own disciplinary strategies pertaining to technologies of self whereby his coaches were required to have the discipline to abide by the club philosophy whilst also potentially having their own

interpretation of a coaching philosophy:

...it's important that they [academy coaches] have a philosophy themselves, but they can't, but you're still in a working environment aren't you? You are still in a working environment so you know you can't, you can't be a builder that's building Barratt Homes<sup>48</sup> and start putting mosaics all over all over it can you? It's your philosophy that it looks better and is whatever but the build that the company want these homes built in [is] this way. So you have the skill set to do flamboyant but you have the discipline to fit in with a working team... (Dexter)

Liam on the other hand referred to how both the technologies of power and the self in regards to the lateral surveillance within his academy's culture had been governed:

We observe each other and give each other feedback. So in the full-time academy, in the Elite Player Development Group we'll give each other pretty informal feedback as we come off [the training pitch]. We sat down at the start of the year [and said] that if somebody was lead coach in part of the session that the other guys have got to take responsibility for watching, for if there's anything they feel that they would have done slightly differently, discussing it and also if there's anything that they feel is really good you know, saying so and pointing that out. (Liam)

The initial practice of panopticism undertaken by the academy directors was so that academy coaches would be docile bodies and the social order of practicing the club's philosophy would be maintained. At the same time, however, the implementation of panopticism was to encourage the diffusion of power. In turn, this was intended to increase the empowerment of academy coaches in order to promote their productivity levels of producing talented athletes. As Foucault (1979, p.208) explained, the purpose of panopticism as a mechanism was to 'strengthen the social forces – to increase production, to develop economy, spread education, raise the level of public morality: to increase and multiply'. Instead of viewing CPD as a progressive and productive mode of educating coaches, however, in Foucault's view of power, it can actually constitute a more effective disciplinary form of control (Anderson & Grinberg, 1998). It is here whereby the data suggests that the

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<sup>48</sup> Barratt Homes is a mass UK housing developer.



concept of governmentality as a technology of control can conceptualise these social processes. As Foucault (1988a, p.19) further defined, ‘the contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self I call governmentality’. Indeed, the concept of governmentality depicts the study of strategic practices of domination, which in itself is the ‘conduct of conduct’ for the process of how institutions or social fields are governed and the processes for how agents within these fields are governed (Dean, 2010).

The development of what the academy directors regarded as a productive and collaborative learning culture has been heavily theorised as a Community of Practice (CoP - Wenger, 1998) and regularly applied within the coach education literature (Cassidy & Kidman, 2010; Cassidy et al., 2006; Culver & Trudel, 2008; Culver, Trudel & Werthner, 2009; Jones, Morgan & Harris, 2012; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014; *inter-alia*). The concept of a CoP did not fully apply to academy directors’ views however. The admission made by the academy directors on the discursive yet overt messages within the coaching CPD programmes, which reinforced club culture of playing and coaching philosophies, suggested more strategic practices akin to the concept of governmentality. This is in comparison to the less benign and functionalist undertaking which CoPs have been prescribed to manifest as (Piggott, 2015). Academy directors’ sentiments of their own actions of social control and governance for perpetuating their academies’ philosophical messages brought a resonance to how Dean (2010, p.24) affirmed the art of government to be: ‘practices of government of self and others presuppose some goal or end to be achieved’. Consequently, in distributing power across the academy, the academy directors were able to strategically and discursively mentor incoming academy coaches, in particular those with a competitive-athletic background at the same clubs the academies were part of.

## 5.5 Iteration 2 conclusion

The data within the current iteration has identified both Bourdieu and Foucault's frameworks as having the capacity to contribute towards conceptualising the structural social processes competitive-athletes encounter when negotiating the career transition into a high-performance coach. Firstly, before any current or former athletes were appointed as academy coaches, the academy directors undertook a subjective assessment of individuals' prospective capabilities to perform as a coach. Akin to the findings of iteration one, this form of coaching talent identification orientated upon Bourdieu's concepts of taste, practical sense, field, capital, habitus, hexis and practice. Prior socialisation within the field of elite sport was considered important for the formation of an appropriate coaching habitus tied to conducting coaching practices that reflected the clubs' philosophies and thus identities. This was because practices of hexis were valued by both academy and senior directors whereby individual coaches who embodied the club's collective values and beliefs were perceived to have more embodied social, cultural and symbolic capital. The academy directors valued sources of formal knowledge, such as NGB coach accreditation, more so than the senior directors.

It is on the theme of educating and developing coaches whereby the theoretical juncture arose as a result of the abductive analytical process. Once current or former elite athletes were recruited and placed in post as academy coaches, Foucault's concepts of docility, surveillance, regimes of truth and panopticism revealed the discursive strategies which the academy directors exercised in shaping specific strands of novice coaches' knowledge. In contrast to the senior directors, the academy directors initially exerted their own power and then diffused this across the academy to further enforce their clubs' coaching and playing philosophies (regimes of truth) for the maintenance and governance of their respective club's identity.

The sustainment of particular coaching practices once academy coaches had been appointed is where Foucault's technologies of power of surveillance, panopticism, and governance were taken into the third iteration to help me analyse forthcoming emergent themes. Indeed, the value of drawing their clubs' current or former competitive-athletes through was based on the perceived internalisation and folding of the clubs' philosophies, and is where the notion of docility was identified as a prominent theme. Therefore, competitive-athletes who had been drawn through within the clubs were assigned with a higher level of trust by the academy directors. Trust was based on coaches' perceived docility towards the club's playing and coaching philosophies through the belief that such athletes had been socialised to these philosophies during their competitive-athletic careers. Subsequently, the concept of docility made it more appealing for academy directors to indeed draw their clubs' current or former competitive-athletes through into academy coaching roles. As a result, the current iteration provides an original contribution to the field's understanding of why and how a 'fast-tracked' career pathway is perpetuated within AF and RU. It also adds to our understanding of how socio-cultural structures shape coach learning and how embodied informal knowledge is valued by academy directors over formally accrued knowledge.

As a result of both Bourdieu and Foucault's theories and concepts having emerged from the current iteration's data, the forthcoming theoretical memo critically appraises the two theories in order to substantiate the sensitising concepts which have informed the project's final iteration.

## 5.6 Theoretical memo (2/3)

The second iteration's data depicted how Foucault's concepts illustrated the technologies of power which the academy directors consciously exercised once coaches were appointed within the academy field. Such technologies of power were operationalised by the academy directors in order for the dominant coaching and playing philosophies (or in Foucault's parlance regimes of truth) to be culturally reproduced. Indeed, as has previously been highlighted within the theoretical sensitivity phase (section 3.2.2), the literature in the field of coach education and development has drawn upon Foucault's work to conceptualise the discursive practices of athletes' self-discipline (Johns & Johns, 2000; Markula, 2003; McMahon & Penney, 2013), coaches' actions towards their athletes (Barker-Ruchti & Tinning, 2010; Denison, 2007; Denison et al., 2015; Manley, 2012; Manley et al., 2012, 2016; Mills & Denison, 2013), the formation of coaches' knowledge (Denison, 2010; Denison et al., 2015; Piggott, 2012), along with the structures of policy legislation which have an effect on coaches' conduct and development (Taylor & Garratt, 2010; Taylor, Piper & Garratt, 2014; Taylor, Potrac, Nelson, Jones & Groom, 2015). The discursive practices employed by academy directors and senior coaches for contouring coaches' individual and collective coaching practices, however, has not been an area where Foucault's theoretical framework has been applied, primarily because of the coach-centric samples which literature has conducted hitherto (chapter four).

The following section therefore critically appraises the theoretical value and insight Foucault's concepts bring to the academy directors' views on the cultural reproduction of coaching practices within academies in contrast to what Bourdieu's concepts do not. To do this, the following section is structured in a way in which Bourdieu's concepts are critically appraised in a mode which Bourdieu himself advocated: to 'think with a thinker against that thinker' (Bourdieu, 1990, p.49, as cited by King, 2000, p.418). Thereby, in following Bourdieu's lead, the ensuing critical appraisal replaces Foucault's concepts and begins by

alternatively conceptualising the in-house CPD programmes that the academy hierarchy prescribed onto coaches through a Bourdieusian lens. Here the concepts of pedagogical action and cultural arbitrary (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) are initially applied and then critically evaluated against Foucault's concepts. Employing such an analytical technique furthermore justifies how the data can be applied to Foucault's concepts in this instance.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) have analysed social and cultural reproduction through applying the notion of cultural arbitrary. Yet their lack of an explicit definition for the term cultural arbitrary has been suggested by Sullivan (2002) to limit the amount of insight it provides because of the ambiguity surrounding its actual meaning. Sullivan (2002, p.149) summarises Bourdieu's cultural arbitrary to be 'unclear' by concluding that 'it is not possible to determine to what extent he is arguing that the dominant culture and the educational values that serve it are no better than any other culture'. When left to infer the meaning of a cultural arbitrary from Bourdieu's earlier writings, it can be suggested to depict the class dominated doxic values of the cultural field that are imposed to sustain society's stratified social class hierarchy and which ultimately ensure the reproduction of the social order (Moore, 2004). In addition to this, it is deemed that Bourdieu's theoretical framework does not clearly conceptualise how these dominant ideologies of a cultural arbitrary are socially and culturally reproduced, other than through agency and structural subconscious practices and through pedagogic action (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Jones, 2007). Indeed, Bourdieu and Passeron (1977, p.5) conceptualised that 'all pedagogic action is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power'. In an attempt to explicate these concepts in their clearest fashion, Moore (2004, p.447) defines how pedagogic action is arbitrary in that:

- (a) the valorisation of positions within the fields of knowledge and taste reflects no more than the interests and discrimination of those who arbitrarily hold power (they contain no internal or intrinsic justifications such as 'truth' or 'beauty'), (b) it is historically contingent that those who hold power do so (they have no natural right to it), and (c) the manner of its action in the transmission of knowledge is objectively

no more than that necessary to impose its authority.

In sum, therefore, and situating this back to the second iteration's data, academy directors' internal CPD programmes, can, in one sense, be considered to be pedagogical action, whereby the fields' cultural arbitrary and doxic values are reinforced and reproduced. In turn, pedagogical action imposes symbolic violence through misrecognition, and therein, legitimises the positions of power which the academy directors possess (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014). That is to say, at first appearance, pedagogic action 'claims to be the opposite of what it really is, it is the systematic denial and misrecognition, which forms of pedagogic action enforce, that constitutes the imposition of an arbitrary and, hence, justifies its designation as symbolic violence' (Moore, 2004, p.448).

Yet Bourdieu's interpretation is suggestive of a lack of objective basis to how those with power legitimise and govern their field's cultural arbitrary. Relating this back once again to the second iteration's data, although Uri had noted how traditional ideological structures influenced his academy's cultural arbitrary of a particular playing philosophy ("so I've really just carried on that sort of tradition" – section 5.4.1, p.135), the same views of historical ideological structures did not necessarily reflect all of the directors' practices; the academy directors were reflexive when it came to implementing their respective academy philosophy and identity. Finley was one participant who explained how his AF academy came to practice its particular coaching philosophy:

We've looked at different styles of coaching, we've researched it, we've investigated it, we've had a few people who support that sort of [way], who support that method of coaching, we've gone and watched it ourselves you know, we've experimented with it ourselves and tried it out ourselves and you know we just feel that it's the right way to coach. (Finley)

On this basis, it is therefore considered that Foucault's concepts depict with greater

clarity and with greater accuracy the intersubjective nature that underpins the social processes for how academy directors as social agents, who acted as ‘cultural governors’ for each club, reflexively operationalised technologies of power for the sustainment and reproduction of their clubs’ dominant philosophies/regimes of truth.

Foucault’s (1979) concepts of surveillance, governmentality and panopticism were designed to highlight the strategic technologies of power that are reflexively exercised by agents who make up the social structures that surround coaches. These discursive strategies guide and shape individual and collective conduct, rendering agents docile (Denison et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2014; Thorpe, 2008). It is Foucault’s conception of power as a relation of forces which furthermore highlights the productive capabilities of agents (Piggott, 2012). For Foucault, power is therefore located beyond either agency or structure as a consequence of its ephemeral and ubiquitous nature (Dean, 2010; Faubion, 1998). Although such a conceptualisation resonates to some degree with Bourdieu’s view of power, there are subtle but nevertheless salient differences to that of Foucault’s conception of power and how cultural practices are socially reproduced. Indeed, Foucault (1980, p.39) deemed power to not concentrate onto a minority of agents stratified throughout society hierarchically, but instead, conceptualised power to exist throughout social spaces in ‘capillary forms’. Consequently, power for Foucault (1979) is exercised through the social space in a disciplinary manner which renders bodies as docile via means of correct training (Jones & Denison, 2016; Taylor et al., 2015; Zehntner & McMahon, 2013). Therefore, it can be considered that the CPD programmes which the academy directors imposed and then diffused across the coaching staff were technologies of power that reprised as correct training by rendering coaches docile to the club’s dominant playing and coaching philosophies.

In turn, Foucault’s conception of power has a dialectical effect in that ‘the processes of enablement and constraint arise together: one cannot exist without the other’ (Deetz, 1998, p.152). This is also somewhat true of Bourdieu’s dialectical conception of power and the

habitus. Bourdieu (1990, p.57) regarded the habitus to not be overtly deterministic as he often framed habitus as 'regulated improvisations'. Added to this, Bourdieu (1977, p.79) defined social agents as 'virtuosos' in respect that they uphold the possibility to contest social norms through engagement of reflexive practices and awareness of their investment within the field, otherwise known as *illusio* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Nonetheless, some scholars (Bottero, 2009; Evens, 1999; Jenkins, 1993; King, 2000) have continued to oppose this view by subjecting the concept of habitus in particular 'to widespread criticism, mainly on the basis of its latent determinism' (Reay, 2004, p.423) in respect of the 'habitus seems a particularly passive construct' (Noble & Watkins, 2003, p.526). It is a point which Bourdieu (1977, p.79) disputed, but his claim that individuals have 'no conscious mastery' means that such criticisms continue to recur (Bottero, 2009). Such criticisms of Bourdieu's work have also been echoed by feminist scholars (Fowler, 2003; McLeod, 2005; McNay, 1999, 2000) who have remarked upon the deterministic nature of Bourdieu's objective social structures for masculine domination. King (2000, p.418) affirms that it is Bourdieu's concept of habitus which 'slips back into exactly the kind of objectivism Bourdieu refutes'.

Nevertheless, the project's data, thus far, has suggested the importance and value ascribed by both the senior directors and academy directors in how they profiled and valued prospective coaches' habitus to embody the beliefs and values associated with the field of high-performance sport, as well as the respective delimited fields of their individual clubs. Socialisation within these delimited fields as a high-performance athlete (Cushion et al., 2003; Lemyre et al., 2007) was seen as an important avenue by the directors for individuals to appropriate and then embody the field's habitus and the necessary species of capital for which respect and credibility could be attained as a coach. This finding reflects the viewpoint of Nash (1999, p.177) in that through socialisation the 'structural code of the culture is inscribed as the habitus and generates the production of social practice'. In such a light, this represents how Bourdieu's work overcomes both dichotomies of agency-structure and



subjectivism-objectivism.

For the present project, therefore, Bourdieu's species of capital, and concepts of field, habitus and practice have value as they collectively allude to how senior and academy directors based their coaching talent identification practices. Therein the concepts at this stage of the project highlight the social processes whereby current or former competitive-athletes are drawn through into coaching roles within either the senior high-performance or academy fields. Yet Foucault's concepts of governmentality, panopticism, technologies of power and of self, which render agents as docile bodies, also allude to how certain coaching practices were legitimised and culturally reproduced, and which acted as social processes for the perpetuation of the elite athlete to coach pathway within the academy fields.<sup>49</sup>

It was these above Foucauldian concepts, along with the above Bourdieusian concepts, which acted as sensitising concepts (Bowen, 2006) that informed the nature of the third iteration. After having sampled the senior and academy directors who were active social agents in supporting the elite athlete to an elite coach pathway, the views of the lived experiences of those agents undertaking this career pathway were sought. Continuing in this manner enabled the data to be continually analysed abductively in reaching a GT for identifying the social processes that underpin the perpetuation of the career trajectory between elite athlete and high-performance coach.

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<sup>49</sup> Figure eight (p.131) presents a visual summary on how Bourdieu and Foucault's theories have been interpreted thus far to conceptualise the social processes for the career transition between an elite athlete and high-performance coach.

## 5.7 Methodological memo (2/3)

As previously mentioned within section 5.2.1, the processes of participant recruitment for this iteration largely mirrored those implemented within iteration one. The biggest change was that I staggered the distribution of the letters of invitation in order to better implement GTM's constant comparison method of data analysis. I believe this was successfully implemented. I also believe that as a result of this the quality of interviews and data analysis has been enhanced after reflecting on the procedures I conducted for iteration one.

The sample size was also improved as a result of engaging with external organisations who assisted with participant recruitment from the outset. I also believe that my transition as an outsider to the field of elite sport was not as much of a hindrance as it was previously perceived to be because of my own growing social capital within the academic field. By the time I began to devise methods of participant recruitment for this second iteration, my network of academic contacts had grown after I had been in a university teaching post for over two years. I had also at this point attended a number of international academic conferences to present the formative results of the first iteration's findings. These had provided me opportunities to foster new relationships with other academics and utilise their extended networks, many of which included AF and RU academy directors. As a result, I found the entire process of participant recruitment for this iteration to be a lot more fluent.

Conversely, however, I did find the power dynamics during many interviews to be a lot more challenging during this iteration compared to the first. In particular, I found that many of the participants attempted to dictate the line of conversation through the course of their interviews. I frequently found that the structure of their answers focussed only on the question for a very short time before they moved off topic. Initially, I was unsure of the reasons for this but I was able to identify this during the interviews and seek clarification of

the answers by re-iterating questions immediately or later in the interviews. As a consequence of being able to spend a greater amount of time analysing and coding the data of each interview before conducting the next, I was also able to identify a potential reason why some of my questions were not being directly answered: it may have been a realisation the participants made that their recruitment processes for appointing academy coaches did not follow recruitment legislation. This realisation was brought to prominence whilst one AF academy director was escorting me off the premises after an interview, he remarked that his human resources (HR) manager would not want to hear many of his answers on the basis that his recruitment processes did not follow such legislation. As this statement was not part of the interview and had not been captured on the Dictaphone, I have not been able to consider nor report it within the analysis of results. Upon reflection, I should have either asked the participant to clarify this statement immediately whilst recording it on the Dictaphone or have at least asked for clarification at a later date via email or telephone when completing the transcript member checking process. Unfortunately in this particular instance I believe that it would not have been possible to ask the participant immediately for clarification as he was in the process of hurriedly escorting me out of the training ground premises in order to catch the team bus which was due to leave for an away fixture. Indeed, this instance represents some of the pragmatic issues I faced during this iteration which I further reflected upon to enhance the quality and length of the third iteration's interviews.

There were two instances in this iteration whereby I had arranged to conduct an interview in person but suffered not being able to have the desired amount of time with the participant due to factors out of my control. It was my preference to conduct face-to-face interviews as opposed to telephone interviews. This was because I perceived face-to-face interviews collected better quality data as they enabled me to recognise visual cues of body language and gauge the participants' reactions to questions better. However, when conducting face-to-face interviews there were some external issues which affected the

quality and length of the interviews. For example, the same participant who disclosed that their HR manager would not like to hear his comments on how he recruited academy staff could only afford me 34 minutes of his time after having other commitments which had over-ran and that he needed to conclude the interview promptly in order to travel with the team to an away fixture. This was even after every participant who preferred to conduct the interview face-to-face selected the venue and date. On another occasion, the participant had double booked my interview and was only available for a short amount of time. Thus this interview lasted for 24 minutes and the participant was reluctant to reschedule another interview at a later date either in person or via telephone.

Nonetheless, both of these interviews were the last two to be conducted in this iteration. Although the interviews were relatively short compared to others, I do not believe that the quality of the data collected was adversely impacted too much because of the limited time I spent interviewing these participants. Having undertaken the constant comparison method of data analysis with the earlier data, these two interviews consisted of much more focussed questions as certain themes were identified and enquired upon. All of these questions were posed with answers recorded and which I believe richly informed the iteration's results.

The two points that I actioned in the final iteration as a result of these pragmatic issues were: 1) should any participant disclose any information at the beginning or end of the interview which had not been recorded then I was to obtain clarification on this point immediately or via transcript member checking, and; 2) I would contact participants a couple of days before the interview via email or telephone to remind them of their agreed time to conduct the interview in order to avoid any double-bookings.

## Chapter 6 - Iteration 3: Elite athlete to coach

If you want to understand how an individual develops over time, you have to study the individual over time (Magnusson & Casaer, 1993, p.217)

After the thesis had obtained the views of the directors on how they perceived the ‘fast-track’ pathway, the current iteration sought to obtain data from a population currently undertaking this transition. Therefore the purpose of the third iteration was to seek an agent-orientated perspective in understanding the lived experiences, realities and actions of those who undertook the transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach in respect of how they actually negotiated this career trajectory. Subsequently, in order to continue the abductive research strategy, the research question for the thesis’ third iteration was set as:

- What were the social processes and developmental pathways of ‘fast-tracked’ male high-performance AF and RU coaches?

The iteration’s chapter reflects the structure of the first two iterations, whereby a theoretical sample is first identified through appraising the samples of the literature in the field of coach development (section 6.1). This appraisal also establishes a robust justification for the study design (section 6.1.2). Data collection methods are detailed along with an overview of how the sensitising concepts of Bourdieu and Foucault’s frameworks informed the interview questions. An account of how the data analysis procedures complemented the thesis’ overarching GTM is also provided. A summary of the results is succinctly delivered prior to engaging in a thorough discussion of the data. Critical appraisal of the theoretical content is once again delivered in a theoretical memo chapter (chapter seven), which in turn leads onto the thesis’ final chapter which outlines the developed GT (chapter eight).

## 6.1 Theoretical sample

If one studies structure only, then one learns why but not how certain events occur. If one studies process only, then one understands how persons act/interact but not why. One must study both structure and process to capture the dynamic and evolving nature of events (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.127).

One of the main findings from the first two iterations was that senior and academy directors strategically promoted practitioner embodied coaching experiences for athletes who were foreseen to embody the club's values. A reason why senior and academy directors valued embodied practitioner knowledge was that these athletes could internalise (through the Foucauldian concept of subjectivation) the social norms of the field. This was not just the fields of elite AF or RU, but more importantly the semi-autonomous delimited field of each club. Former or current competitive-athletes who exhibited a subjectivation of the club's values of playing and coaching philosophies were identified more favourably as candidates for drawing through into high-performance coaching roles. On this basis, to help answer the project's overarching research problem, the third iteration theoretically identified a sample of both current elite athletes and recently retired elite athletes who were at the time of data collection negotiating the journey from a competitive-athlete to high-performance coach. A justification for the sample and the methods employed for the project's final iteration is therefore detailed below.

Although the senior and academy directors placed little value on formal knowledge derived from NGB coaching qualifications, they still recognised the requirement of prospective coaches to either possess a minimum level of formal coaching qualifications, or at least be working towards them. Even though the academy directors recognised that formal coach education introduced candidates to some valuable pedagogical knowledge, the internal surveillance processes of CPD and informal mentorship schemes which they arbitrarily

governed<sup>50</sup> were administered in order to circulate and reproduce their respective field's philosophies. It was these sub-cultural messages specific to the field which were valued over the pedagogical knowledge for coaching that came from NGB formal qualifications.

Given the project continued to employ an abductive analysis (Blaikie, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2015 – section 1.2.2), the themes emanating from the first two iterations were taken forward. The views of high-performance athletes or recently retired high-performance athletes who were *currently* undertaking this career trajectory and who were *currently* completing their coaching qualifications were abductively analysed against the themes identified within iterations one and two. The reason for placing emphasis on the 'current' context arose from the critique of previous literature's samples and the methods employed when investigating the value coaching practitioners ascribed to formal coach education (section 3.1.2.1): that intuition biases and habitual routines of practice detract from the accuracy of participant's responses within interviews (Ericsson et al., 2007). Further detailed analysis on this is provided shortly after justification of the chosen site of investigation is first made.

While both the senior and academy directors recognised that there was legislation surrounding the appointment of coaches, and that candidates were required to obtain a minimum level of qualification, they nevertheless conceded that elite athletes who transitioned into high-performance coaching roles were 'fast-tracked' in many cases with support of the respective NGBs (Rynne, 2014). As it has previously been outlined within the thesis (section 1.5), UEFA, the European governing body of AF has sanctioned its support of a 'fast-track' pathway for elite athletes to attain higher level coaching qualifications. At the time of writing, within UEFA's (2015, p.22) latest '*Coaching Convention*' policy, it

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<sup>50</sup> The term 'arbitrarily governed' has been applied in this instance as an amalgamation of the project's findings thus far. 'Arbitrary' has been taken from iteration one (section 5.3.1) to signify how the senior directors acted as 'cultural custodians'. 'Governance' has been taken from iteration two (section 8.4.1-2) when conceptualising how the academy directors controlled academy coaches' knowledge and practices.

stipulated that member bodies such as the FA and PFA can ‘organise a specific course for integrating the content of a UEFA B diploma course with that of a UEFA A diploma course for long-serving players’. It defined long-serving players who were eligible for these courses to be ‘a player who has played at least 7 full years as a professional in the top division of a FIFA or UEFA member association’ (*ibid*, p.22). This has changed from a previous edition of the ‘*Coaching Convention*’ (UEFA, 2010, p.28) whereby concessions on admission criteria for long-serving players who had ‘played a least five full years as a professional player in a top division of a FIFA member association and at least 20 times for the national A team’ were afforded. The FA’s coaching pathway model (figure five, section 3.4, p.77) depicts the ‘fast-track’ nature for senior professional players. In the ‘main strand course pathway’ the ‘entry route’ for populations without a competitive-athletic background is different to the entry route for ‘UEFA B for Senior Professional Players’ as the FA exempt current or former senior athletes from acquiring entry qualifications of the level one and two coaching awards.

Similarly, to AF, within RU the RFU have organised and delivered UKCC level three coach education courses solely for the purpose of ‘senior professional players’ to register onto without having acquired the entry-level qualifications of either a level one or two coaching awards. This pathway contrasts to what the general population are required to obtain and is not represented in the RFU’s coach pathway model (figure six, section 3.4, p.77). As such, figure six does not truly reflect the concessions which at the time of writing were made for exempting senior RU professionals from acquiring the entry level coaching courses.

Because both AF and RU granted current or former elite athletes entry onto level three coaching qualifications without the attainment of entry level qualifications (Rynne, 2014), level three formal coach education courses solely designed for long serving senior professionals was theoretically identified as the site for investigation within both sporting



fields. Thereby the first sampling criteria of the current study was designed to recruit participants who were currently enrolled onto one of these ‘fast-track’ level three courses specifically organised for senior professionals/long-serving players.<sup>51</sup>

With the site of study centring on the ‘senior pros’ formal coach education courses, it is worthwhile outlining how formal coach education courses are structured in their delivery within the UK. Reviewing the delivery of formal coach education against the literature on coach education and development assisted in identifying some of the limitations which have confounded coach development analyses. Consideration of these then informed the project of a pertinent study design and data collection method.

#### **6.1.1 Literature overview on coach education and development: A critique of samples and methods**

In 2002, one of the principal recommendations proposed by the newly formed UK Coaching Taskforce was that NGBs should align their coach education and qualifications with the established UK national occupational standards (Mackintosh, 2012). This alignment then entitled coaching qualifications to be endorsed by the governing body of sports coaching, Sports Coach UK’s ‘UK Coaching Certificate’ (UKCC) scheme. The UKCC was created to standardise the format of coach accreditation across sports. Effectively, before the implementation of the UKCC framework, one NGB’s level two coach certification could have been the equivalent of another NGB’s level three coach certification. The introduction of the UKCC endorsement sought to provide some consistency across sports along with

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<sup>51</sup> For brevity, these courses are herein referred to as ‘senior pros’ courses.

meeting the national occupation standards for sports coaching (Mackintosh, 2012; The National Coaching Foundation, 2012).

For NGBs to have their coach education courses endorsed by UKCC, the national governing body of coaching, Sports Coach UK assesses each course's eligibility on four key criteria: 1) quality assurances which covers a technical programme that reflects the needs of the athletes within the sport; 2) the quality of the resources to support the content delivered; 3) the course delivery workforce, who need to have undertaken the appropriate tutor training that has also met national standards and; 4) the learning programme, which encompasses the practical and theoretical delivery of the course content either during the face-to-face delivery or through the tasks which candidates must complete externally (Mackintosh, 2012; The National Coaching Foundation, 2012). It is on this final criterion against which a critique of the methods employed by empirical studies analysing coaching expertise/efficacy and coach developmental pathways can be framed.

Formal coach education courses in recent years have extended the length and format of their delivery after recognising that coach learning and development is undertaken over an extended period of time (Cushion et al., 2003, 2010; Turner et al., 2012). UKCC endorsed coaching qualifications above level one accreditation (levels two to five) to now be conducted over the duration of six to 12 months.<sup>52</sup> The change from one-off formalised sessions over the course of a single day or weekend has reflected the field's understanding that the acquisition of coaching knowledge is not instantaneous (Turner et al., 2012), nor is it considered to be disseminated within formal contexts in a linear and uniformly singular manner that is regulated in a reductive 'top-down approach' from course tutors down to course candidates (Côté, 2006, p.220). The extended duration of formal coach education

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<sup>52</sup> To see how formal coach education courses are administered over a prolonged period of time within the UK, readers are encouraged to refer to empirical studies (Chesterfield et al., 2010; Stodter & Cushion, 2014; Townsend & Cushion, 2017) which have utilised formal coach education courses as a site of investigation when analysing their efficacy and impact on coach development.

courses within the UK and internationally<sup>53</sup> has also been introduced to incorporate the multiple modes of learning and environments which coaches' sources of knowledge has been identified to originate from (Araya, Bennie & O'Connor, 2015; Christensen, 2014; Cushion et al., 2003; Leduc et al., 2012; Mallett et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 2006, 2013; Sherwin et al., 2017; Stodter & Cushion, 2014; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2015). Candidates registered onto these courses are required to complete a number of assessments in multiple formats and contexts, situated both internally and externally to the course which encapsulate the many learning environments where coaches are reported to acquire knowledge from (Lemyre et al., 2007; Rynne, et al., 2006; Werthner & Trudel, 2006; Wright et al., 2007). Internal course learning environments range from formalised classes, workshops and practical sessions that are led or facilitated by the course tutors (Nelson et al., 2006). External learning environments are usually situated within the domains candidates regularly practice within on a day-to-day basis. The integration of external coaching placements has been designed to promote the amount of situated learning opportunities candidates are exposed to (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006) for promoting the frequently upheld view that coaches 'learn by doing' (Erickson et al., 2008; Mesquita et al., 2014).

When practicing in these external environments, each coach has to also accommodate infrequent visits from the course tutors who administer formalised observations of candidates' coaching practice (see Chesterfield et al., 2010). These visits provide the basis for individually tailored mentoring opportunities (Jones, Harris & Miles, 2009; Wright et al., 2007). Such mentoring strategies are purported to enhance the person-centred approach for developing coaches (Cassidy et al., 2006; Douglas & Carless, 2008) which coaches themselves have been recorded to significantly value as opposed to prescriptive modes of formal coach education (Galvan et al., 2012; Nelson et al., 2013;

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<sup>53</sup> See Cassidy et al. (2006) along with Galvan et al. (2012) or Leduc, Culver and Werthner (2012) as international examples of empirical studies which have utilised formal coach education courses as a site of investigation.

### **6.1.2 Moving forward: A proposed method for investigating coach development**

It is contended here that empirical studies examining the development of coach's knowledge and career trajectories have remained somewhat static in their approach for designing research methodologies. That is to say, a significant proportion of studies which have qualitatively investigated coach learning and development, have analysed the perspective of individual coaches at singular points in time through implementing one-off interviews (e.g. Nash & Sproule, 2009; Townsend & Cushion, 2017; Rynne, 2014). It is argued that such studies do not entirely reflect the extended nature of formal coach education or the longitudinal characteristics of coach's career trajectory and associated knowledge development (Gilbert et al., 2006; Hussain et al., 2012; Irwin et al., 2004; Turner et al., 2012).

Moreover, most published studies that fall within this criticism specifically locate their research on examining the development of coaching expertise (e.g. Nash & Sproule, 2009). This in itself is problematic (see Nash, Martindale, Collins & Martindale, 2012). Employing data collection methods via one-off interviews (structured, non-structured or semi-structured), only captures the participant's perspective of the issue at one temporal 'snapshot'.<sup>54</sup> These studies have centred their focus on capturing data via narrative (Jones et al., 2004; McMahon, 2013; Potrac et al., 2002; Zehntner & McMahon, 2014) and biographical (Christensen, 2014; Erickson et al., 2007) research designs. Here, such

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<sup>54</sup> Mills (2015) has identified similar limitations of the coaching literature and has attended to these via an autoethnography that depicts how he negotiated a coaching identity over different stages of his life.

scholarly work has employed retrospective interviews intended to invoke participants into recalling, with the benefit of hindsight, to 'look back' on what led to their development in attaining perceived expertise status (e.g. Wang & Straub, 2012). Although these studies have provided significant insight on a number of valuable findings on coach development that span over a variety of sports coaching fields, it is contended here that continuing in such a manner can saturate the literature and limit further comprehension for some of the more nuanced social processes which affect coach development and learning. Therein the benefit of novel research designs for approaching the phenomenon of how coaching knowledge is constructed and how the attainment of coaching efficacy is reached is considered as a potentially fertile venture for the field as a whole (Garratt, 2013).

Acknowledgment of the findings of 'expertise' in other disciplines away from sports coaching assists in the identification of prospective new research angles and methods. For example, when analysing experts within the disciplines of business and management, Ericsson and colleagues (2007) identified that during the processes of becoming experts habitual routines of deliberate practice were developed and then employed (section 4.1.2).<sup>55</sup> During data collection procedures, which were predominantly semi-structured interviews, the participants under focus were also prompted to retrospectively recall aspects that were directly or indirectly associated to these habitual routines of deliberate practices. The authors (*ibid*, p.3) concluded that 'intuition biases' clouded the accuracy of participant recollections during interviews because 'anecdotal, selective recall, and one-off events all can present insufficient, often misleading, examples of expertise'. Sports psychologists, Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (1988, p.252) identified these same limitations:

Being retrospective, the interview cannot easily separate the actual event from the cultural form and the personal wishes that may influence its reality. More than anything else, interviews are limited by vagaries of memory and by the difficulty

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<sup>55</sup> Deliberate practice is taken to mean the purposeful process of learning activities such as reflexive action which individuals engage in when situated within a specific domain or role they are seeking personal improvement for attaining expertise status (Ericsson et al., 1993).

that persons unused to reflection have in reporting events, especially events that take place in consciousness.

Findings of a similar nature have been presented within the body of literature examining perceived expert sports coaches. Nash and Sproule (2009) employed retrospective semi-structured interviews to analyse the career development of expert coaches. The authors recorded the coaches to have found the process of self-reporting difficult as they ‘could offer no real insight into their designation as experts’ (*ibid*, p.121). The reason for this could be based on two accounts which ultimately detract from the accuracy of the study’s conclusions. Firstly, by designing the study to prompt the participants into retrospectively recalling information over the course of a lengthy coaching career may have meant that hindsight and intuition biases clouded the data in respect of the study participants’ recollections and judgements. Secondly, the fact that Nash and Sproule’s (2009) study participants were unable to recall any insight into their designation as experts, may have been because the habitual routines of practice which experts are considered to undertake (Erickson et al., 2007) were practiced at a subconscious level. On this basis, the coaches’ habitual routines of practice can be regarded to comprise as part of their coaching habitus (Light & Evans, 2013).

Critiquing Bourdieu’s determinist and unconscious notions of habitus, Noble and Watkins (2003, p.531) contend that the formation of agency habitus is performed by agents consciously thinking forward and projecting ‘embodied fantasies’ as a form of ‘synthetic reflection’.<sup>56</sup> In so doing, Noble and Watkins (2003) identify the agential capacities of habitus transformation which opposes Bourdieu’s unconscious formation of the habitus. Consequently, by only interviewing and collecting data from coaches at one point of time in an attempt to retrospectively look back on their development is considered to exacerbate the

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<sup>56</sup> Noble and Watkins (2003, p.531, emphasis added) take ‘synthetic reflection’ to mean how agents ‘imagine’ what they can and cannot do; a conscious process that is based on experience as a ‘*projected*, embodied fantasy, but on the basis of already inscribed bodily capacities’.

difficulty for enabling individuals to accurately recall their habitual routines of practice. This method of data collection also omits the opportunity to analyse the projections individuals make when creating a habitus or even transforming a habitus via deliberate practices when seeking to become an expert (Erickson et al., 2007).

The above considerations directed the present iteration of wanting to follow or ‘walk with’ individuals currently negotiating the pathway of transitioning from an elite athlete to high performance coach. It was intended to interview candidates registered onto a ‘senior pros’ formal coach education course at multiple points in order to obtain a more accurate understanding of their career transitions into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles at the time, or as close to the phase in which they negotiated this transition.

An advantage for employing multiple data collection points is that over the course of multiple interviews, prospective questions can also be posed in addition to retrospective questions (McLeod & Thomson, 2009). Retrospective questioning denotes how participants are prompted to recall historical events by ‘looking back’. Prospective questions encourage the respondents to project their thoughts forward when considering future intentions and by explaining how these are planned to be achieved (Magnusson & Casaer, 1993; Taris, 2000; Thomson & Holland, 2003). Research designs which include both retrospective and prospective questioning have been considered to have a greater propensity to explore how individual and group identities are produced (McLeod & Thomson, 2009). Indeed, the formation of a ‘coaching identity’ was a theme which arose from the project’s first two iterations. Integrating both types of questions over multiple data collection points was judged to enable me to progressively ‘walk with’ the participants for when they negotiated the realities of life (McLeod & Thomson, 2009) and the social processes which they encountered when transitioning into a post-athletic high-performance coaching career and when forming a coaching identity.

Phenomena which are directly associated with time and temporality, such as

processual phenomena, have been regarded to be influenced by a number of cultural variables (Neale & Flowerdew, 2003). Research designs employing singular interviews are considered to restrict the ability of capturing all of these influencing social structures which can, and do - as reported within iterations one and two - shape individuals' development of knowledge which is initially acquired and then later retained (McLeod & Thomson, 2009). Consequently, for the study of processual phenomena of transitions, pathways and the development of knowledge, which all apply to the present project, the promoted use of research designs integrating temporality has become ever more prominent in many areas other than coach development.

It must be noted that a recent growth of empirical analyses on coach development have addressed the limitation of singular one-off retrospective interviews. A number of recently published studies (Deek, et al., 2013; Leduc et al., 2012; Lemyre et al., 2007; Stodter & Cushion, 2014; Watts & Cushion, 2016) have captured data at multiple points of time when utilising formalised coach education courses as a site of investigation. Similarly, De Martin-Silva and colleagues (2015) employed a longitudinal study design which 'tracked' the development of UK sports coaching undergraduate students at multiple points over the length of their studies. Combined, these studies have helped further inform the complex and dynamic processes of coach learning whilst also elucidating a better understanding of the contextual issues associated with coach development.

For the present iteration, therefore, a study design which included multiple data collection points was regarded to be relevant for providing a greater understanding of the social processes associated with the career trajectories of elite athletes who transitioned into high-performance coaching roles. Importantly, such a study design was also considered to be consistent with the project's overarching GTM on the basis that the abductive research strategy would be continued. The extended duration of 10 to 12 months for the delivery of 'senior pros' formal coach education courses also complemented an extended study design



to span the duration of these courses. Thereby in order to ‘walk with’ the course candidates, data was collected via semi-structured interviews as close to the start and end of each course.

It is important to stress that the ‘senior pros’ level three coach education courses were not the primary focus of analysis. Instead, the courses were used as environments for participant recruitment on the basis that the courses were seen to act as the ‘pinch-point’ or ‘bottleneck’ for current or former elite athletes to go through when negotiating a post-athletic high-performance coaching career. Capturing the participants’ views as closely to the start of their ‘formal’ transition into coaching was purposefully designed to best allow them to accurately recall how a competitive-athletic career in their sports had contributed to their subconsciously acquired beliefs and views of coaching (i.e. their *habitus* or state as a docile body). As such, participant recruitment commenced during the first day of the ‘senior pros’ courses with interviews scheduled as close to this time as practically feasible. An outline of the procedures for participant recruitment is forthcoming (section 6.2.2).

Second phase interviews were conducted 10 to 12 months after the first interviews. At this point the participants were scheduled to be at the culmination of the courses and would therefore be able to provide accurate accounts on the significance of the multiple learning environments associated with their coach development (Nelson et al., 2006; Mallett et al., 2009; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2015). It was expected the participants would be able to accurately recall the impact of the formal/mediated and informal/unmediated sources of knowledge, by reflecting on the impact which their competitive playing careers had on their coach development along with the formal coach education course. The sampling criteria which the study constructed, and which were outlined on the Letters of Invitation (appendix F), were as follows:

1. You are currently a professional football or rugby union player, or have recently retired from playing in the last 12 months.
2. You now intend on following a coaching career in your respective sport.

3. You are available to schedule *two* interviews with me: the first before (date) and the second a *maximum of 12 months after the first*.

The justification for the first criterion was based on the results generated from iterations one and two, whereby it had been identified that senior and academy directors were strategically promoting practitioner embodied coaching experiences to their current senior athletes. The recruitment of participants who continued to compete was also judged to be informative for analysing how they prospectively viewed the process of negotiating the transition into high-performance coaching, a research angle which hitherto had not been investigated. By also recruiting participants who had retired from competitive play within the last twelve months of the first interview, enabled these participants to provide their own accounts from another temporal point of time. The rationale for including the condition of participants who had only retired from competitive play within the last 12 months of the first interview was based on the aforementioned limitations of studies whose participants suffered from potential memory recall errors when considering how their athletic career had informed them on coaching knowledge and skills.

## **6.2 Method**

### **6.2.1 Participants**

A total of 15 male participants were recruited, 10 from RU and 5 from AF. All of the participants were registered onto a level three 'senior pros' coaching qualification in the same sports they had competed in as an athlete. The participants were British nationals with the exception of one South African, one Irishman, and another who held dual citizenship from two Antipodean nations. These three participants had resided and professionally competed in their respective sports within the UK for a range of six to 13 years. Seven

participants had represented their nation at full international level. Another three participants had competed at youth international level. The remaining five participants who had not competed at either senior or youth international level had all been professional athletes and had competed for teams within the top two English divisions of their respective sports between eight and 13 years (table seven, p.183). At the time of the first interview six participants (4-RU, 2-AF) were still professional athletes. By the second interviews, only two RU participants had not retired from their competitive-athletic careers.<sup>57</sup>

Within the discussion, the data which have been drawn upon were collected directly from participants during the interviews. The one exception, however, is the reporting of Mark's data from his first interview. This is because the electronic file storing Mark's first interview became corrupt and the data for Mark's first interview was lost. The theoretical memo (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) made immediately after Mark's first interview has instead been drawn upon and has replaced the citing of any empirical data of Mark's first interview.

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<sup>57</sup> Please refer to tables nine (p.187) and 10 (p.192) which draw on raw data to highlight each participant's circumstances at the point of the first and second interviews as well as what coaching experiences they had accumulated between the interviews.

**Table 7 Samples' competitive-athletic career characteristics**

| <b>Sport</b>    | <b>Pseudonym</b> | <b>Highest athletic level<br/>(international/ domestic club<br/>representation)</b> | <b>Length of<br/>competitive<br/>athletic career<br/>(years)</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|---|--|
| <b>Rugby</b>    | Sonny            | Full International/ Premiership   | 12   |
|                 | Henry            | U20 International/ Championship   | 4  |
|                 | Casper           | Full International/ Premiership   | 18   |
|                 | Rory             | Full International/ Premiership   | 8  |
|                 | Conrad           | Full International/ Premiership   | 13   |
|                 | Calvin           | Full International/ Premiership   | 8  |
|                 | Mark             | Premiership   | 15   |
|                 | Greg             | Championship  | 11   |
|                 | Billy            | Full International/ Premiership   | 15   |
|                 | Connall          | Premiership   | 14   |
| <b>Football</b> | Kieran           | Premier League  | 16   |
|                 | Eamon            | Championship  | 18   |
|                 | Tim              | U20 International/ Premier League   | 14   |
|                 | Owen             | U21 International/ Championship   | 18   |
|                 | Stuart           | Full International/ Premier League  | 15   |

**Table 8 Sample characteristics and baseline information of RU participants between interview one and two**

| Pseudonym | Interview 1  |   |  | Interview 2   |   |  |
|-----------|--|---|--|---|---|--|
|           | Employment status  | Past coaching experiences   | Data   | Employment status   | Coaching experiences since interview 1  | Data   |
| Sonny     | Premiership athlete (full-time)  | Academy coach & Community coach with contracted professional club | I do coach once a week for a team in (current UK city playing professional rugby at), just a local team. The standards are still quite low but I it just happens you know the club has quite a few connections in the (current Premiership rugby club) region but you know I just really enjoy working out there.  | Part-time coach<br><br>Co-business owner away from rugby.<br><br>Retired from rugby since interview 1 | Part-time voluntary school assistant coach                                      | So from the job wise, firstly, I haven't picked up any jobs and the reason behind that is because I didn't feel like I'm ready yet to you know to try to apply for a proper job, not having the level three.   |
| Henry     | Championship athlete (full-time)   | College (youth) Position specific Part-time                       | So I coach a team at a college who are affiliated to a Premiership side so I get to work with a lot of young talent  | Championship athlete (part-time)<br><br>Full-time coach of college team.                              | College (youth A-league) Full-time  | I would suggest the rugby side has been better than expected in terms of you know coaching, playing every day is quite easy in my opinion only because I love it you know. And I loved coaching, but I loved coaching part-time, so I was very unsure if full time was going to be the right thing for me, which I now think it is and I've thoroughly enjoyed it. |
| Casper    | Coach (part-time)<br><br>Employed full-time in an alternative occupation away from sport | Adult semi-professional Head Coach & DoR                          | I retired at the end of 2012 and I'd only just done my level two coaching but I didn't really want to coach but I thought I might as well do it because to have it on the CV and then a coaching job just fell in my lap. And I sort of 'ummed' and 'arred' about it. Am I going to do it? And I decided I'd give it a crack, just found that I really enjoyed it. | Coach (part-time)<br><br>Also employed in an alternative occupation away from sport                   | Adult semi-professional<br><br>Head coach and DoR with same club as interview 1 | I think the last time I spoke to you I've changed jobs, I'm now in a more secure environment in terms of employment... I've got my day job and I've got coaching which you know doesn't pay me a lot of money but it you know it's still nice to have a few hundred quid at the end of the month from coaching so it sorts of supplements me.                      |

|        |   |   |   |  |  |   |
|--------|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| Roy    | Coach (part-time)<br>Joint head coach<br>Semi-pro adults  | Community coach<br><br>Junior Colts<br>Voluntary  | I am a blank canvas, I've not done a lot of coaching... I'm going back to a team called (semi-professional rugby football club 1). They are a team I played for when I was a kid and I stayed there until I was twenty-four   | Unemployed /unattached coach   | Joint head coach<br>semi-pro adults & school team  | It's been hard. I've been coaching at (semi-professional rugby club 1), and I found it difficult coaching there. I coached at a school, (school name 1), and I found coaching the 16 to 18 year old kids easier and more enjoyable than coaching adults.  |
| Conrad | Coach, (full-time)<br><br>Position specific at same club previously represented. See data for additional coaching roles | Less than 6 months in youth/school, amateur adults, university and senior professional<br>Position specific   | So I retired from playing in February... Came back to the UK looking for coaching roles but there's not a lot out there but fortunately the last month I've managed to get myself a kicking coaching role at (Premiership rugby union club 1) and I'm coaching a club team a local club team in (English town 1), I'm coaching at the (grammar school name) at (English town 1) and I'm hopefully trying to sort something out coaching (English university) as well. | Professional Premiership position specific coach with same club as interview 1 which used to represent (full-time) | Youth/school coach, amateur adults coach, university coach and senior professional position specific coach (part-time) | I ended up doing four jobs covering professional, amateur, university and school, covering the spectrum which was great,...a job came up here (current Premiership club 1) and I sat down with (DoR name 1) and got interviewed for it and got offered it...<br><br>So I'm the backs and attack coach here which is great. It's probably, being realistic, it's probably been a couple of levels higher than I could have expected to go in at but it's great that he's shown the faith in me and I'm confident that I can do a good job of it but at the same time it's going to be a big challenge. |
| Calvin | Championship Athlete (full-time)  | Academy - Position specific coach at same club currently represented  | I coach the academy backs twice a week... I support the three full-time coaches there. You've got the academy manager, his assistant to the academy manager and you've got another full-time coach. And I just basically assist them.   | Premiership Athlete (full-time)  | Amateur adults (part-time)   | So I did my level three and as part of the level three I had to head up a coaching team. My team was (semi-professional rugby club name 1)...   |
| Mark   | Coach (part-time)<br>Employed full-time in an alternative occupation away from sport                                    | Adult Semi-professional position specific coach and academy coach at the same club previously represented     | Had just retired from competitive play and was continuing to work as a non-contracted part-time coach at the club which he had just retired from. Also worked at the same club's academy twice a week (*Memo content drawn upon to substitute lost data)  | Part-time coach<br>Employed in an alternative occupation away from sport   | Semi-professional adults<br>University (part-time)   | I've been the coach for (semi-professional rugby club name 1), I've been doing Tuesday and Thursday nights and Saturday and then I've been doing some freelance coaching at (amateur University rugby club name 2) on a Wednesday and a Monday. So it's, there's so much just part-time...  |
| Greg   | Player-Coach (part-time)<br><br>Semi-professional (part-time)   | Semi-professional assistant coach.<br><br>Community departments at clubs previously represented as an athlete | Currently I am a coach I've been well this last year trying to step away from playing... now I'm coaching more than playing. Still play now and then if I have to   | Coach (full-time)  | Semi-professional coach<br>School coach part-time  | I'm still the head coach, but the director he's at school, (school name 1) on Saturdays, first team. So when he's with them I just step in and become the acting director... in the week I work at (school name 1) school and then I coach the under sixteens and the thirteens   |

|         |   |   |  |   |   |  |
|---------|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| Billy   | Part-time position specific coach at a Premiership club – the same club previously represented                        | Community department and academy at club previously represented as an athlete   | Initially I was offered the position as player stroke scrum coach with our previous coaches. Then they got sacked at the end of last year, and then (DoR name 1) and that came in, and I'd finished playing then because my achilles was snapped and he offered me the chance to re-interview for the scrum coach's role. And I re-interviewed again against two or three other people and I got the job from there.   | Part-time coach at Championship club<br><br>Employed part-time in an alternative occupation away from sport | Professional coach<br>Position specific<br>Part-time  | I'm fortunate to a certain degree that I'm not a full time coach, you know I'm here on a Monday and Tuesday and a Saturday, and then when I'm not here I'm on the farm   |
| Connall | DoR at semi-professional club (part-time)<br><br>&<br>Position specific coach at 2 Premiership clubs (both part-time) | More than 2 years in youth/school and youth regional representation.<br><br>Community departments at clubs previously represented as an athlete | I'm director of rugby at a National Two North team called (current National Two North Rugby Club 1) which is a post which I accepted this season, and I'm also a, I'd suppose you would class it as a throwing coach where I work with (current Premiership Rugby Club 1) their first team squad and academy players and (current Premiership Rugby Club 2). Also, my role within (current Premiership Rugby Club 2) is a scrum coach so again developing individual's techniques. | Position specific coach (full-time)   | Professional position specific coach at one Premiership and one Championship clubs<br><br>Part-time | I was working with a number of clubs, two in the Premiership and one in National Two North. Since then with the amount of travelling and timescale and so on I'm now just focussing on coaching during the day with (current Premiership rugby club name 1) as a specialist throwing coach and scrum coach and then assisting the other coaches with player development, and I'm also working with (current Championship rugby club 1) who are now in the Championship again as their specialist throwing coach. |

**Table 9 Sample characteristics and baseline information of AF participants between interview one and two**

| Pseudonym | Interview 1   |   |  | Interview 2   |   |  |
|-----------|---|---|--|---|---|--|
|           | Employment status   | Past coaching experiences   | Data   | Employment status   | Coaching experiences since interview 1                    | Data   |
| Kieran    | Championship U16 academy and lead phase coach (Full-time)   | Championship academy assistant coach<br>Part-time at the same club previously represented | Yell well I retired in the summer through injury so May time and (current Championship Football Club 1) have offered, well they offered me a coaching role, because my contract was expired with them and I got an injury about sixteen months ago which I had to retire with and just made the decision to go into coaching rather than carry on playing.... whilst I was injured I just got involved a little bit you know helping out and because for most of the injury for that period I couldn't do much in the gym so I just helped out with the coaching and just its gone on from there really. And at the current time I'm taking, I'm the manager of the under sixteens at the academy full-time and so it's just worked out quite well for me at the minute. | Championship U18 academy coach (different club to interview 1) (Full-time)                                      | Championship U16 academy and lead phase coach (Full-time) | Yeah I had a season at (current Championship football club 1) with the sixteens which I mentioned before and then with the takeover at (current Championship football club 1) they subsequently made people redundant. I was one of those with numerous other coaches. So in the summer I just found myself out of work really with coaching, so I applied for a few jobs and I'm currently the under eighteens development coach at (current Championship football club 2). |
| Eamon     | Part-time Non-League U16 academy coach with same club previously represented as an athlete<br><br>Employed full-time in an alternative occupation away from sport | Semi-professional Assistant coach (Part-time)   | I'd done the non-league scene, I've been involved with, been sort of like coach, bit-part player you know end of my career. Because you know it suited and I was with a manager who you know trusted me to take sessions and what have you and play a little bit. But then obviously you know I can't play anymore so it sort of like stops me from doing that bit so really I just want to concentrate on the coaching and obviously (name 1) is down here taking the academy and you know he asked me to get involved last year. I left (current non-league football club 1) as a coach in March...  | Non-League U16 academy coach (Part-time)<br><br>Employed full-time in an alternative occupation away from sport | Semi-professional assistant coach (Part-time)             | I've done my level three and obviously bringing that stuff that I'm learning through that into my coaching with the under sixteens that I take here.   |



|        |   |   |   |   |  |  |
|--------|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| Tim    | Championship academy U18 coach at the same club previously represented as an athlete (Full-time)                          | Championship academy U13 Part-time Adult semi-professional Part-time player-coach at the same club previously represented as an athlete | I played in the Premier League, Championship and League One for (current Championship Football Club 1) and then League One, League Two and Conference for various other clubs, so like I say I've done the whole sort of spectrum of the levels and then finished playing when I left (current League Two Football Club 3) in 2012 and I had a year playing part-time for a team called (current non-league Football Club 2) and I combined that with coaching part-time here. I took the under thirteens here for a season and then got asked to take the under eighteens on a full-time basis beginning July 1st this current season. | Championship academy U18 coach (Full-time)<br><br>Same club as interview 1  | Championship academy U18 coach (Full-time)                               | ...obviously the day to day involvement with (current Championship Football Club 1) under eighteens, sort of released quite a lot of second years last year, gave a couple of professional contracts out so I've had that sort of experience now   |
| Owen   | Non-league player & Championship U16 academy coach at the same club previously represented as an athlete (Part-time)      | Community coach & Championship academy assistant coach at the same clubs previously represented as an athlete                           | About two months ago I had a phone call from an ex-colleague of mine who I played with at (current Championship Football Club 1), he's ended up going back to (current Championship Football Club 1) as a coach within the academy and he invited me in for a sort of briefing and we ended up having a conversation and I started coaching there about a month ago four days a week in the evenings coaching the under sixteens at the academy level   | Non-league semi-professional player (part-time)<br><br>Non-league reserve team coach at same club as an athlete (Full-time) | Championship academy U16 assistant coach at the same club as interview 1 | I've taken up a new coaching position at (current non-league football club 1). I've got the, I'm a player still so I'm still registered as a player but I'm the reserve and youth team coach at (current non-league football club 1) on a full-time basis and I'm doing the under fifteens at (current Championship football club 1) academy on a part-time basis. |
| Stuart | Premiership U18 & U21 assistant coach (Full-time)<br><br>Had just moved to the club two months before the first interview | Full-time non-league academy manager at the same club represented as an athlete   | Yeah at (current Premier League Football Club 1) my coaching role is I suppose you could call it assistant coach of our under twenty-one development team which in old money is the old reserve team at football clubs.   | Premiership U21 head coach (Full-time)  | Premiership U18 & U21 assistant coach (Full-time)                        | I can't remember from maybe last October, certainly when I first came into the club when I joined I was working with the eighteens and twenty-ones and now I've been shifted up to the twenty-ones full-time, so whether that has changed since I last spoke to you in October I can't remember.   |

### 6.2.2 Participant recruitment

To gain access to such a specific and restricted population, relationships with key stakeholders who acted as gatekeepers were sought (Dexter, 2006; Harvey, 2010, 2011; Mickecz, 2012; Richards, 1996). The RFU National Coach Development Officer and a PFA Regional Coach Development Officer were contacted to assist with participant recruitment. Both figures were course tutors who delivered and co-ordinated the ‘senior pros’ courses for their respective sports. These figures sanctioned the conduct of participant recruitment at the commencement of the new cohort intake attending the ‘senior pros’ level three coach courses.<sup>58</sup>

Both of the AF and RU courses began with a three-day residential programme. Participant recruitment was conducted by initially speaking to all of the candidates in the first morning’s introductory session of the courses’ residential components. Every course candidate received a Letter of Invitation (appendix F) and an Informed Consent form (appendix G) that stipulated the study’s ethical conditions which had been approved by the same HE ethics committee as the first and second iteration’s ethics. A verbal outline of the study’s ethical conditions was also provided to each cohort. Declarations of interest to participate in the study were made later that same day by participants confirming contact details and by returning the Letters of Invitation. Some participants at this time identified that their preference was to conduct interviews during the residential component of the course. These opportunities were duly taken advantage of and the procedures for the delivery of the interviews is forthcoming (section 6.2.4).

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<sup>58</sup> In an attempt to further protect the identities of the study participants, the year of the cohort intake has not been reported.

### **6.2.3 Validity and reliability measures**

It was explicitly agreed between myself and the stakeholders representing the PFA and RFU that the study had to comply with the ratified ethical arrangements. The following conditions were therefore agreed to by the PFA and RFU stakeholders: 1) anyone deciding to participate in the study would do so by their own will and that declining to participate would not adversely affect a candidate's success for attaining accreditation; 2) none of the participant's identities would be disclosed to any representative of the PFA or RFU, and; 3) that any information disclosed within the study would not compromise a candidate's ability of attaining successful accreditation from the course.

The same reliability measures of transcript member checking (Carlson, 2010) taken from iterations one and two were applied. All participants received an electronic copy of both their first and second interview transcripts within 10 working days of each interview. Each participant was asked to read the transcript and make amendments to any statements which they judged to be inaccurate interpretations of their views and return these electronically to me within 10 working days of receiving them. None of the participants made any changes to either their first or second interview transcripts.

### **6.2.4 Procedure**

First phase interviews were conducted at, or as close to as possible, the commencement of the 'senior pros' courses. Second phase interviews were conducted 10 to 12 months afterwards to coincide with the culmination of the course. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or over the telephone depending on the preference of the participant. A total of eight first phase interviews and five second phase interviews were

conducted over the telephone. First phase and second phase interviews individually lasted between 22 minutes and 59 minutes (mean 37.33 minutes,  $\pm$  10.51). All face-to-face interviews were held in private at a location of the participants' choice. Probing beyond the core schedule enabled me to elicit further information on themes more intuitively (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Table 10 provides a range of examples for some of the questions used within the first set of interviews along with an overview on how some of the themes and concepts engendered from the first and second iterations informed questions.

**Table 10 Semi-structured interview schedule and associated sensitising concepts for first interview phase questions**

| Broad Themes  | Specified Themes   | Sensitising Concepts  | Examples of Questions  |
|---|--|---|--|
| Background/<br>contextual<br>information            | Summary of current position  | Cultural capital  | Are you currently still playing or are you now coaching?   |
|   | Extent of playing background   | Symbolic Capital<br>Cultural capital<br>Habitus formation   | What level did you play at?<br>How long for?<br>Which clubs?   |
|   | Motivation for transitioning into coaching                                       | Context specific<br><br>Doxa<br><br>Field   | Why have you decided to seek a coaching career in comparison to all of the other potential occupations you could have moved into?<br><br>Which environment do you want to coach in, senior or academy for example, and why?<br>What role do you wish to aspire to coach in, specific technical coach, head coach or other?   |
| Recruitment and appointment                         | Drawn through within clubs   | Social capital, doxa<br><br>Hierarchical surveillance and profiling by senior and academy directors – doxic practices   | Who will/did you make contact with to get a coaching job?<br><br>How will/did you become appointed in the role you want/wanted to coach in?  |
| Coaching skill sets                                 | View on effective coaching – importance of generating athlete to coach ‘respect’ | Habitus formation & field<br><br>Personal dispositions<br><br>Win versus loss<br>Athlete centred philosophy - docility<br><br>Empathy and ability to have athletes’ respect | What about your personality, your characteristics, how important are they for you as a coach to be seen as effective?<br>Why are those skills important?<br><br>Which of the skills you listed do you think you have?<br><br>What makes an effective coach in your eyes?<br>In your eyes, how important is it to be able to have empathy with your athletes?<br>How important is getting your players to respect you?<br>How do you get player respect as a coach? |
| Informal embodied learning and sources of knowledge | Significance of competitive playing career on coach development                  | Subconscious and conscious development - habitus<br><br>Importance of philosophy – playing and coaching   | How much impact has a competitive playing career had on developing your coaching?<br><br>How has a playing career shaped your coaching philosophy?   |
|   | Cultural traits acquired   | Habitus formation & field<br>Technologies of power and self, governmentality & panopticism  | Why do you have that coaching philosophy?  |
|   | Status   | Cultural capital<br><br>Symbolic capital<br>Habitus formation & field<br>Symbolic capital   | How much does your playing background help you get player respect as a coach?<br>How much do you think your playing background will help you get player respect?<br>How much will you draw upon your athletic career when coaching?<br>Why is respect so important for coaches?  |

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
|  | Key experiences – prospective and retrospective         | Cultural and social capital<br>Habitus formation & field  | What were the key experiences which you look back on that have helped your coaching development?<br><br>To what extent do experiences away from playing and coaching help you in your coach development?     |
| Formal learning and sources of knowledge | Coaching qualifications - prospective and retrospective | Field, cultural capital<br>Surveillance, panopticism<br>Mentorship – technologies of the self<br>Cultural capital – technologies of power | In what ways have coaching courses helped?<br><br>What have you learnt from formal coaching courses?<br><br>What have you developed since going on the course?<br><br>What other courses may you enrol onto? |
| Future development                       | Aims and objectives                                     | Habitus formation & field<br><br>Cultural capital<br>Practice   | Looking forward over the next 12 months, what do you want to achieve?<br><br>How will you go about achieving those?  |

The second phase interviews were less structured in comparison to the first because each participants' case profiles and experiences since the first interviews were highly individualised (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2014; De Martin-Silva et al., 2015). Therefore the above themes presented in table 10 were built upon but the conduct of the interviews comprised more like conversations that were highly fluid and which allowed each participant to be reflexive in looking backwards and forwards on how they interpreted their individual experiences (Neale & Flowerdew, 2003; McLeod & Thomson, 2009; Taris, 2000; Thomson & Holland, 2003). As such, for each interview, questions were individually tailored to the participants' case profiles as well as including questioning which pertained to the overarching themes which had emerged at the aggregate group level. An example of the second phase interview questions is provided below in table 11 along with some of the themes and concepts which informed the questions.

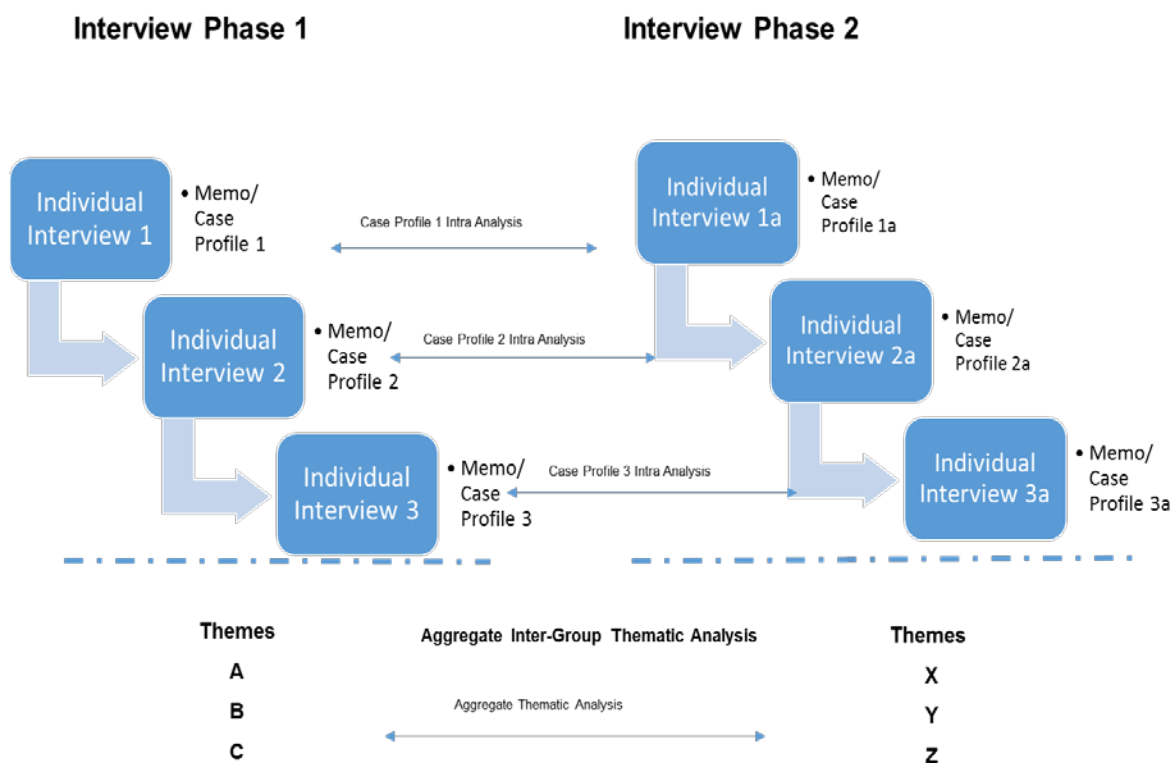
**Table 11 Semi-structured interview schedule and associated sensitising concepts for second interview phase questions**

| Broad Themes                                  | Specified Themes                                 | Sensitising Concepts  | Question Examples   |
|---|--|---|---|
| Coaching role                                 | Direct experiential learning                     | Habitus, practice, technologies of self   | So when I spoke to you last year you were working in the academy set up, you were doing two nights a week there. Did that carry on?<br>What coaching role have you had over this past year, has it been the same since I last spoke to you?<br>What has changed regarding your coaching role since I last spoke to you?   |
|   |  | Field, practice   | How are you getting on in your role?  |
| Coach development and learning                | Learning contexts (informal, non-formal, formal) | Conscious reflexive practices<br>Retrospective, technologies of self<br>Field, technologies of power<br>Field<br>Prospective, conscious reflexive practices, technologies of self | So what have you gained this year in your coach development from all of those experiences?<br>So what other skills have you developed over this past year that have perhaps further enhanced from this time I spoke to you last year?<br>So what's had the biggest impact on your coach development then?<br>What other areas have helped you in your coaching development?<br><br>Going forward then, what do you want to develop on or what areas do you want to perhaps experiment in a coaching capacity? |
|   | Formal coach education                           | Capital   | How beneficial has the level three been for you?<br>Do you think you'll register onto any other formal NGB coach courses?   |
| Working relationships – structural influences | Mentorship                                       | Capital, docile bodies  | How has your mentor on the level three helped you?  |
|   |  | Technologies of power, field & significant others   | What has the relationship been like with your mentor?<br>Have they helped, the mentor or anyone else, other coaches that you've observed or worked with over this past year, have they helped you in any other areas of coaching?<br>You mentioned one of the other coaches there who worked at the club, what about the other coaches in the senior team set up, how do you think after this year they see you as a coach now?   |
|   | Coaching & playing philosophy                    | Surveillance, docile bodies   | Who has had the biggest impact on your coach development?   |
|   |  | Technologies of power, discipline, docile bodies  | To what extent have you changed your view of coaching to fit in with the club?  |
| Coach status                                  | Respect & Credibility                            | Capital   | I hear that a lot, empathy and the ability to empathise with players, how much has that had on your coaching and how you deal view players?<br>How do you think your players view you as a coach?   |
| Impact of an athletic background              | Tacit knowledge                                  | Habitus, practice, technologies of self, illusio, discipline  | So how much have you drawn from your playing experiences, how much have you drawn from that or have you used your new ideas that you've gained from other people over the past year?  |
|   | Coach status                                     | Capital, reflexivity  | So you didn't draw on for your experiences what other coaches have done in that circumstance?<br>How much have you referred back to your playing background when you've been coaching?  |
| Future ambitions                              | Continual coach learning                         | Capital, field, reflexivity   | A hypothetical question, if another position within the same league you've been competing in became available, would you go for that or would you focus working with the school environments instead?   |

### **6.2.5 Data analysis**

In alignment with GTM's constant comparison method, data collection was once again conducted in concert with data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Study designs with multiple interviews of the same participants affords data analysis to be conducted on two fronts (Taris, 2000). Firstly, descriptive and line by line open coding was completed for each individual interview within interview phase one. The open codes then informed the development and refinement of questions for the benefit of the following phase one interviews. Individual case profiles were analysed on an intra-individual basis in a mode which reprised as theoretical memos in order to identify emerging themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Once all of the interviews in the first phase had been completed, axial coding was then conducted on the aggregate group level. This same process of data analysis was conducted during second phase interviews. Throughout the conduct of collecting data in the second phase interviews, data analysis was continually undertaken by going back and forth between the first and second interview phases to create individual case profiles. Further selective coding of the aggregate axial themes taken from both sets of interviews was also continuously conducted through constant re-reading of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998 – see figure nine, p.196).





**Figure 9 Illustration of data analysis procedures**

### 6.3 Summary

At the culmination of the study, only Calvin and Henry continued to professionally compete as athletes. Subsequently, Calvin and Henry did not consider their primary identities to be coaches but instead principally saw their identities as athletes.<sup>59</sup> The remaining 13 participants had retired from a competitive-athletic career at the point of the second interview and considered their identities to be that of a coach and not an athlete, even when some had not successfully negotiated the career transition from an elite athlete into a

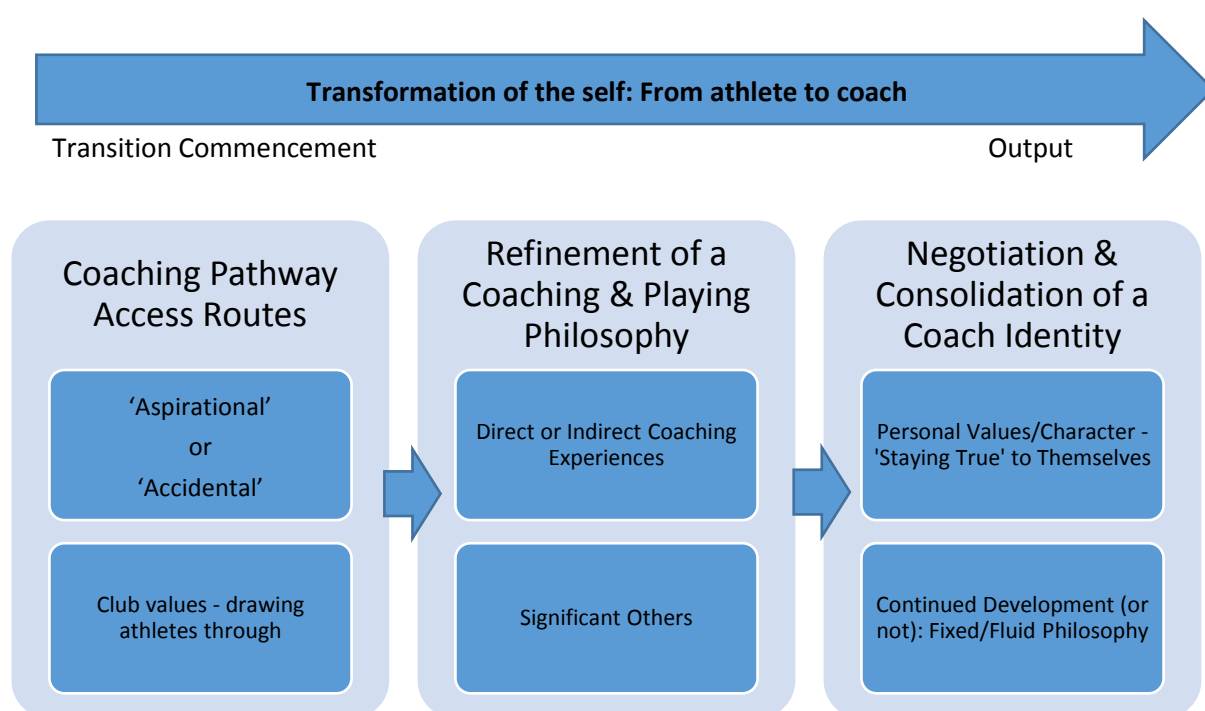
<sup>59</sup> When using the term ‘identity’ within this context, it is intended to represent a ‘set of meanings that classifies who an individual is when they are occupying a given role in society or being a member in a group, or specifies a set of characteristics that identify him or her as an individual’ (Pope, Hall & Tobin, 2014, p.136).

post-athletic high-performance coaching role. As table eight shows (p.184-6), at the time of the second interview, Rory was unemployed as a coach but continued to seek a coaching role. Mark, Billy, Sonny and Eamon were only employed in part-time roles yet they all still harboured ambitions to each attain a full-time coaching contract. Nonetheless, Rory, Mark, Billy, Sonny and Eamon all regarded themselves as coaches at the time of the second phase interviews. This was because they had all practiced in coaching roles during the time elapsing between interview one and two (see table 15 [p.271] and figure 12 [p.235] for location of practices as coaches within specific fields – section 6.4.5) along with their continued pursuit to each attain full-time employment as coaches. For ease and clarity, throughout the reporting of results the participants are collectively referred to as ‘the coaches’, irrespective that Calvin and Henry continued to be competitive-athletes.

The fact that 38% of the sample had retired from competitive-play, but who had not attained full-time coaching employment status by the second interview, highlights the dynamic and somewhat insecure nature of the career pathway from elite athlete to high-performance coach which previous studies on coach developmental processes has not reported (cf. Erickson et al., 2007 – see figure three, section 3.1.1, p.28). The finding also signifies the longitudinal nature to coach development, because, at the time when data collection was conducted, although these participants were not employed at the level or status they desired, it does not discount the possibility that they could one day attain a high-performance coaching role and become classified as expert coaches (Abraham et al., 2006; Turner et al., 2012).

As the project explored the transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach, the coding of data identified a narrative whereby the themes mirrored the transitional nature of the coaches’ careers in whatever coaching field they were recorded to have practiced within. This resulted in the creation of three robust theoretical themes of: ‘coaching pathway access route’; ‘refinement of a coaching and playing philosophy’, along with;

‘negotiation and consolidation of a coach identity’.



**Figure 10 Relationship between axial codes and theoretical themes**

Advocated by Corbin and Strauss (1990), figure 10 takes the form of a logical diagram that denotes the ‘logical relationship between categories and their subcategories (Buckley & Waring, 2009, p.324) as it depicts the career and identity transition encountered by the coaches. Situated on the left of the model are the codes associated to the initial ‘access routes’ for coaching pathways. The model then illustrates the transitional juncture the coaches encountered when negotiating and consolidating a ‘coach identity’. A transformational process of the self overarched the career transition which the coaches negotiated when forming a coach identity (Jacobs et al., 2016; Mills, 2015; Purdy & Potrac, 2014) from their identity as elite athletes.

Although Christensen (2013) along with Barker-Ruchti and colleagues (2014) have critiqued stage-based career models for the conceptualisation of sports coaches’ career trajectories (e.g. Bloom et al., 1998 and Erickson et al., 2007 – see section 3.1.2), the discussion of the present iteration’s results is structured in a manner which highlights the

overarching themes of the career pathways the participants negotiated. At the same time, the results also pay attention to the non-uniform ‘complexity of individual career development’ which Barker-Ruchti and colleagues (2014, p.119) called research to recognise. Indeed, the finding that not all of the study participants successfully negotiated the transition into a full-time coaching role furthermore highlights the non-functionalist, non-uniform and complex pathways for elite athletes who negotiate the transition into post-athletic high-performance sports coaching careers.

After signifying the ‘access routes’ into coaching by defining the differences between what has been categorised as ‘aspirational’ and ‘accidental’ coach career pathways, the theme of the participants having to refine a coaching and playing philosophy is then theoretically analysed. The discussion culminates by detailing the development and overall output of the coaches having had to ‘negotiate and consolidate a coach identity’. For some of the participants, the formation of a ‘coach identity’ was a moderately fluent process, whereas for others it was somewhat problematic (De Martin-Silva et al., 2015; Purdy & Potrac, 2014). Here, the data opposed the concepts of Goffman’s front and back stage impression management strategies. It is at this point where a critique of Goffman’s work is presented, along with where all of the associated social processes are discussed and theorised.

## **6.4 Results and discussion**

### **6.4.1 ‘Access routes’ into coaching: Introductory coaching roles**

Directly corresponding to the findings of iterations one and two, all of the coaches had been ‘drawn through’ into their very first coaching roles during their competitive-athletic careers *within* clubs they had represented as elite competitive-athletes (sections 4.3.4

& 5.4.2). As competitive-athletes, the coaches fulfilled informal and intermittent coaching roles within their affiliated clubs. Echoing the findings of previous elite coach pathways (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2014; Christensen, 2013; Erickson et al., 2007; LaVoi & Dutove, 2012; Nash & Sproule, 2009), these first coaching roles were undertaken during the early stages of the coaches' competitive-athletic careers and had low levels of responsibility. Consequently, these coaching roles have been categorised as 'introductory coaching roles'. These roles occurred within community programmes that were located within the same respective delimited fields of the clubs the coaches had been contracted to as athletes (section 5.6). In addition to their athletic responsibilities, the coaches perceived that they were obliged to fulfil these introductory coaching roles within their club's community department during their athletic careers. Greg and Sonny were two of the coaches who referred to how this form of obligation was structurally imposed upon them by their employers at their clubs. The italicised text within their statements attempts to signify this structurally imposed factor:

...when I was at (current English National League One rugby union club 1) *we were always placed* with schools and things and that's where it started, coaching levels and the coaching badges and seeing how kids develop from coaching. And that's where it just kept on coming and going... work with the community, with schools, also with young offenders and things like that... Because it was something that *the club* really invested in, the young people, and I think that's where everything [coaching] started. (Greg, added emphasis, interview one)

We *get put out* in the community with rugby and do a bit of coaching. I love all of that sort of stuff. You know some boys [athletes] might find that as a bit of you know a hindrance on their rest day, things like that. I really do enjoy getting back out there you know and coaching. (Sonny, added emphasis, interview one)

It was these informal 'obligations' within community departments which were identified as first introducing the participants to the roles of practising coaches. As Tony's quote from the first iteration identifies, one reason why elite club athletes practised as community coaches was associated with coaching talent identification purposes:

Yeah I mean we do, so we've put all our players in previous years have gone through coaching so we've put them all on coaching and the way that we test the water with them is that we put them into our community programmes so they come and they

deliver coaching through the community programme and then those that have more of an aptitude for it or want to follow it that becomes quite clear through that process. And then they will go for the [academy or senior team coach] jobs... (Tony, Senior Board Member of a RU Championship Club, iteration one)

The senior directors' profiling of their athletes' potential coaching talent was not identified by the coaches whilst they were athletes, or even after they had retired from their competitive-athletic careers. This lack of acknowledgement of the directors' profiling strategies alludes to the invisible nature of surveillance (Foucault, 1980) of such coaching talent identification strategies.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, during their coaching placements within the fields of the community departments, not all of the coaches at this point exhibited the desire to seek a post-athletic coaching career. Whilst once again emphasising the obligation to coach within the community, Casper explicitly stated that he did not enjoy working within the community field whilst he was a competitive athlete:

Part of being a rugby player, you *get sent* out to schools to things like that so I'd only ever coached kids. I didn't enjoy it... coaching kids anyway when I was a rugby [player], when I was playing. So maybe if I'd been coaching men then maybe I would have got more of a buzz [for coaching]. (Casper, emphasis added, interview one)

Like Casper, a small proportion of the sample stated that practising within these community fields did not instil an initial desire of wanting to pursue a post-athletic coaching career. For the majority of the participants, however, these introductory coaching roles were regarded as the catalyst for wanting to pursue a post-athletic coaching career.

...the first year I was signed within the academy at (current Premiership Rugby Club 3) you know, 'they', *the academy put us through* coaching qualifications so we could go out into the community and coach, coach kids, and I think it's developed from there into a passion really. (Connall, emphasis added, interview one)

During their competitive-athletic careers, coaching children at a participatory level within the community fields was the primary role. None of the coaches expressed an

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<sup>60</sup> This theme is further analysed later (section 6.4.3)

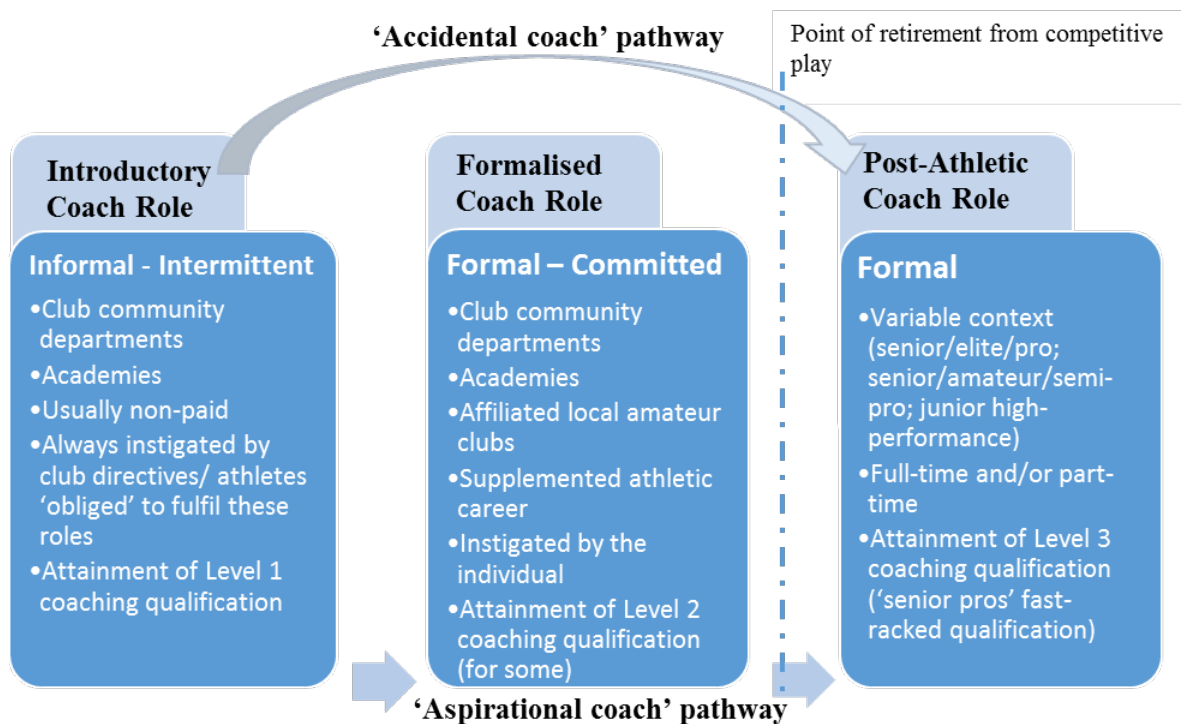
ambition to continue working within this specific field for a post-athletic coaching career. Moreover, none of the coaches described wanting to coach within women's AF or RU at either adult or youth levels in any of the interviews. A smaller proportion stated a preference to work with elite juniors within academies or representative school and regional teams. The majority of the coaches, however, stated their ambitions were to coach elite senior athletes in their respective sports: "I don't want to coach local club sides, I want to coach Premiership and then obviously eventually coach England or a national team" (Conrad, interview one).

Signifying the influence exercised by the clubs and the club representatives, community departments acted as the semi-autonomous delimited field which provided elite athletes with their first introductory coaching roles and initial 'access route' into attaining a post-athletic coaching role. It was these social structures of the elite sports field which were recorded to socialise athletes to the norms for the role of a coach relevant to each club's delimited field (Cushion et al., 2003; Townsend & Cushion, 2017). As such, the social agents, like club directors situated within the field of each club, have been conceptualised here as an 'enabling structure' that formatively facilitated elite athletes' pathways into initially practicing as coaches, albeit these roles were in an informal capacity within the community departments (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2014; Christensen, 2013; Erickson et al., 2007; LaVoi & Dutove, 2012; Nash & Sproule, 2009). As is now further defined, in nine out of 15 cases, these introductory coaching roles inspired the participants to consciously seek further coaching experiences alongside their competitive playing careers, whereas others did not.

#### **6.4.2 ‘Aspirational’ and ‘accidental’ coaches**

The coaches fell into two categories of either ‘aspirational’ or ‘accidental’ coaches. Although all coaches had accessed introductory coaching roles in some capacity as an athlete, some intentionally sought additional experiences to build upon these precursory experiences. Aspirational coaches intended to negotiate their way into a post-athletic coaching career and met two criteria: firstly, aspirational coaches purposefully and proactively sought further coaching practices in addition to the ‘introductory coaching roles’ whilst they were competitive athletes, and; secondly, aspirational coaches accessed further formal NGB coach education courses during their athletic career for the purposes of preparing them for a post-athletic coaching career. The additional coaching roles which supplemented the participants’ competitive-athletic careers have been classified here as ‘first formalised coaching roles’ (figure 11, p.204) as they took the form of coaching positions which the participants had committed to on a regular basis alongside their competitive-athletic careers. In effect, running in parallel with their competitive athletic careers, aspirational coaches consciously exercised their own agency as they strategically negotiated their own transitions into coaching. The pathway of aspirational coaches is presented as the bottom pathway in figure 11.





**Figure 11 Distinction between ‘aspirational’ and ‘accidental’ coach career pathways**

The ambition of aspirational coaches to attain a post-athletic coaching career was consciously made and ‘self-initiated’ (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2014, p.122) by individuals during their athletic careers *after* they had practised within an ‘introductory coaching role’ (Christensen, 2013). Sonny was one who clearly explained how he consciously exercised his own agency to continue working with his community programme’s schemes in preparation for a post-athletic coaching career:

I sometimes just ask my community group at the (nickname of Sonny’s current Premiership rugby club). You know I’m always open to them to make sure I get extra sessions; so for me it’s a massive one, getting out there and doing it [coaching]. (Sonny, interview one)

Sonny continued to work with his club’s community programme on a regular basis but also coached a local amateur team whilst he was a Premiership RU athlete. Supplementing this, Sonny also attained his level two RU coaching qualification before he registered onto the level three ‘senior pros’ course. With these two points combined, Sonny *intended* to negotiate a pathway into a post-athletic coaching role and was thus categorised

as an aspirational coach (table 12, p.208).

Connall was another aspirational coach. Contrasting with Sonny's coaching pathway, however, Connall explained how he strategically changed clubs as an elite athlete. Reflexively making this decision then allowed Connall to fulfil extra formalised coaching roles alongside his athletic commitments in preparation to enter into a post-athletic coaching career:

I was sort of coming to the end of my playing career. I took options to be able to, you know, accelerate my coaching experience rather than maybe staying in the game [as an athlete] for another season or two... when I left (current Premiership Rugby Club 2) I joined (current Championship Rugby Club 1) and I insisted to try to get a coaching role within a school so that I could get my hours of delivery up. (Connall, interview one)

Whilst continuing to compete as an athlete, Connall had a clear intention to acquire the coaching experiences and the coaching knowledge which came from such direct experiential learning opportunities (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2014; Erickson et al., 2008; Gilbert & Trudel, 2005). Connall's ambition to enter a post-athletic coaching career was reflected by a number of other participants. One was Stuart, who at the time of the first interview had retired from competitive play for just short of 12 months:

...at the height of my playing career it [coaching] probably was a backwards thought because you are just enjoying playing in the Premier League and all the rest that comes with it. But it was only when I started to move on down the lower leagues, it happened around twenty-five or twenty-six, that I thought well I'm going to have to do something when I've finished playing and what better way of staying in the game than becoming a coach. So I started my coaching badges at about twenty-four, twenty-five. (Stuart, interview one, added emphasis)

Although Stuart had attained his level one and two coaching qualifications whilst he was a professional footballer, and indeed had the ambition of becoming a coach whilst he was a competitive-athlete, this alone did not categorise Stuart as an aspirational coach because Stuart had not sought or committed to any formalised coaching roles whilst he was a competitive-athlete (figure eight, p.131). Stuart's own explanation of his specific pathway

into coaching provides a rationale for his categorisation as an accidental coach:

In my mind I wanted to take that step from retiring into it but you know I bit the bullet and went into it as academy manager at (current Non-League Football Club 1) at twenty-nine, thirty years old; had a season there which was extremely difficult... In the whole master plan of it all you probably sit down at twenty-five and think well I'm going to play for another ten years; at thirty-five I get to a certain age [and] that's when I'll call it a day and go into coaching but it just didn't happen like that for me... (Stuart, interview one)

Conversely, Eamon had not attained any formal coaching qualifications in addition to not having gained any further formalised coaching experience. Eamon was therefore categorised as an accidental coach as he did not intend to enter into a post-athletic coaching role whilst he was a competitive-athlete and therefore had prioritised the continuation of his athletic career by purposefully moving to lower level clubs:

So, you know, I've gone down that route of, you know, wean myself off it [playing] and play for as long as I could, and then obviously started my coaching badges this year. I mean I should have done them years ago while I was still playing, but you know, when you're a footballer like, you just think the world revolves around you playing football. *You don't think about the coaching aspect* but as you get older, you know, you think well perhaps I could do that. And now it's apparent that now my body has packed up playing wise that [coaching] is something that I quite fancy having a go at. (Eamon, interview one, added emphasis)

It was only those coaches who had acquired *both* formal coach education qualifications and engaged in coaching practices whilst they were competitive-athletes (which have been categorised here as formalised coaching roles), who were coded as aspirational coaches (see table 12, p.208). Henry and Calvin were the only two participants who remained as athletes at the time of the second phase interviews (see table eight, p.184). As a condition of registration onto the 'senior pros' coach education courses, Henry and Calvin were actively coaching teams alongside their current competitive-athletic careers and were therefore classified as aspirational coaches because they actively engaged in formalised coaching roles for preparing themselves for a post-athletic coaching career.

At the point of interview one, many of the coaches viewed attendance and the

attainment of formal coach accreditation as the main barrier or ‘stepping-stone’ (Christensen, 2013, p.108) to negotiate for a transition into a post-athletic coaching career. Stuart explained how he advised individuals who continued to compete on the benefits of attaining their formal coaching qualifications during their athletic careers:

...my friends now who are still playing... I tell them all the time, do them [coaching qualifications] when you are playing. You know you’ve got so much time on your hands, don’t leave it until you’ve finished playing to think well I’m going to do my coaching badges now, because every job in youth football now you need to have your badges. (Stuart, interview one)

Similarly, Casper was one who regretted not obtaining his level three coaching qualification whilst he was a competitive-athlete:

What a plonker! Why didn’t I do my badges earlier? Because I could have done... I could have done that ten years ago and then I could have done my level three and I wouldn’t have to go through all this rigmarole that we are having to go through now... So that’s really frustrating, but, but I never, I never thought I’d enjoy it, and I didn’t enjoy it, coaching kids anyway [within club community departments]... (Casper, interview one)

Although Casper had attained his level two coaching qualification towards the end of his competitive playing career, his lack of willingness to seek any formalised coaching roles after his imposed introductory coaching roles also categorised him as an accidental coach.

**Table 12 Categorisation of ‘aspirational’ or ‘accidental’ coaches**

| Sport | Pseudonym | Aspirational or Accidental Coach | Data – taken from first phase interviews  |
|-------|-----------|----------------------------------|---|
| Rugby | Sonny     | Aspirational                     | ...we get out in the community with rugby and do a bit of coaching. I love all of that sort of stuff... <b>Yes so I do coach once a week</b> for a team in (UK city name), just a local team.   |
|       | Henry     | Aspirational                     | So I coach a team at a college who are affiliated to a Premiership side so I get to work with a lot of young talent <b>and also make sure I’m going to work with</b> the England under eighteens coach whose been a massive influence on me as a person and suited my playing style and his philosophy. And I’d like to be working with him and also working with England under twenties coach, <b>I would like to learn from other Premiership clubs</b> you know from making contacts.  |
|       | Casper    | Accidental                       | I’d only just done my level two coaching but <b>I didn’t really want to coach</b> but I thought I might as well do it because to have it on the CV and then <b>a coaching job just fell in my lap...</b>  |
|       | Rory      | Accidental                       | I’m such a, <b>I am a blank canvas I’ve not done a lot of coaching</b> , I think some of the boys who’ve been on level two and done that years ago and have had teams for years, I think that they are set in their way and it’s a bit harder for them to adapt and change where because <b>I haven’t really done anything</b> it’s really useful for me this course because I didn’t really know that there’s four different types of coaching style ( <i>sic</i> ).   |
|       | Conrad    | Aspirational                     | <b>I always did a little bit of coaching in the last probably five years as a player</b> , I was doing coaching. I coached (ladies rugby club name) for two and a half seasons and then coached (local team name) men’s team for a year and a bit.  |
|       | Calvin    | Aspirational                     | I was in the (Championship rugby union team 1) academy and... somebody who had a role in the academy when I was there, is still there, and <b>he actually he asked me</b> if I would be interested in looking over some of the good academy players and it kind of moved from there really and I kind of got a role with the academy then.  |
|       | Mark      | Aspirational                     | Sought a semi-professional club whereby additional team unit coaching responsibilities could be accumulated. (*memo)  |
|       | Greg      | Aspirational                     | ...when I was at (current English National League One rugby union club 1) <b>we were always placed with schools and things and that’s where it started</b> , coaching levels and the coaching badges and seeing how kids develop from coaching and that’s where it just kept on coming and going. And I really look fond of it and I really like enjoy coaching and enjoy working with young people, but not just young people but like even the adults... And then after that obviously I started to get a bit older so <b>at (current Championship rugby union club) I started to work a lot with schools, kids and academies</b> and that’s where I started the coaching bit, started to take a bit of a bite on me. |
|       | Billy     | Accidental                       | ...and <b>the opportunity arose</b> you know I wanted to give it a go and test myself at the highest level really... <b>Initially I was offered the position</b> as player stroke scrum coach with our previous coaches...Also, the role that <b>I got offered</b> was with the senior squad, so stepped up to the mark straight away you know. It’s quite a bold move because it’s quite a pressured position to go into straight from playing but yeah you know if there’s an opportunity you’ve got to take it in life I think.  |

|          |         |              |  |
|----------|---------|--------------|--|
|          | Connell | Aspirational | ...the first year I was signed within the academy at (current Premiership Rugby Club 3) you know <b>they the academy put us through coaching qualifications</b> so we could go out into the community and coach, coach kids and I think it's developed from there in to a passion really... it (coaching) <b>was something that always interested me</b> you know I was sort of quite natural with my delivery and again as I was sort of as I was sort of coming to the end of my playing career <b>I took options to be able to you know accelerate my coaching experience</b> rather than maybe staying in the game for another season or two...  |
| Football | Kieran  | Accidental   | Well I retired in the summer through injury, so May time, and (current Championship Football Club 1) have offered, <b>well they offered me a coaching role</b> , because my contract was expired with them... I never really liked, probably most footballers thought about you know well <b>I didn't really see myself going into coaching</b> and then through the injury at (current Championship Football Club 1) <b>they've really sort of supported me and pushed me</b> to get involved with the coaching, particularly (name 1) who is an ex-player as well, he's in charge of the academy...  |
|          | Eamon   | Accidental   | I've gone down that route of you know wean myself off it and playing for as long as I could, and then obviously started my coaching badges this year. I mean <b>I should have done them years ago while I was still playing</b> but you know when you're a footballer like you just think the world revolves around you playing football <b>you don't think about the coaching aspect</b> but as you get older you know you think well perhaps I could do that. And now it's apparent now that you know now my body has packed up playing wise that is something that you know I quite fancy you know having a go at... Well this is my first, obviously my first club who gave me my first chance... <b>And then I came to a couple of youth games, (Academy Director name 1) asked me</b> to come to a couple at the end of the season and then it was you know <b>in the summer he said you know do you want to take the sixteens</b> which is Tuesday, Thursday nights and obviously Sundays and I'll you know I'll get you on the steps to do your coaching badges which was great... |
|          | Tim     | Aspirational | Yes I mean <b>I've actually coached at the academy since 2005</b> . So to start with I was just doing a couple of nights with the under eights to start with for five to six years two nights a week <b>no weekend commitments because obviously I was playing. When I finished playing full-time that's when I did a year where I sort of played part-time and that's when I also took a team, under thirteens</b> so that enabled me to do I think it was three training session a week plus the game on a Sunday and then obviously the full-time position now.   |
|          | Owen    | Aspirational | <b>I'm into my third year now at (current non-league Football Club 2)</b> ... for the past two or three years I started doing my qualifications starting at level two and I'm currently doing my UEFA B and I start my youth modules... <b>I started coaching there about a month ago</b> , four days a week in the evenings coaching the under sixteens at the academy level...   |
|          | Stuart  | Accidental   | In the whole master plan of it all you probably sit down at twenty-five and think well I'm going to play for another ten years, at thirty-five I get to a certain age that's when I'll call it a day and go into coaching but <b>it just didn't happen like that for me...</b>   |

Accidental coaches were participants who were recorded to have met at least two of the three criteria: 1) had retired as an athlete at the time of the first interview; 2) had not attained any additional coaching qualifications of their own choosing<sup>61</sup>, and; 3) had not practised in any formalised coaching roles in addition to their first structurally imposed introductory coaching roles (see table 12 [p.208] and top pathway in figure 11 [p.204]). As an accidental coach, Casper explained that when he retired from a competitive-athletic career he did not immediately enter into a coaching role but transitioned into employment external to RU and sport in general:

It wasn't like when I was still playing and you know readying myself for retirement to go straight into coaching. It was because literally, right, I've retired, I'm going to go working; I start working and then its, right, do you want to coach? I'm like, not really, I'll give it a go and finding actually that I quite like it, I think I'm quite good at it. (Casper, interview one)

Similarly, Kieran explained how he intended to follow a career pathway into a post-athletic vocation away from AF:

No to be honest I hadn't even thought about coaching... I sort of made my mind up that I was going to move away from football and go into the estate agents side because I set that up in 2007 you know with the idea of it being something to go into after football. And that's where my plans were to go into that and work in there because I've done little bits and bobs throughout my career and being involved a little bit. But then this [academy coaching] opportunity *came up* and you know I really enjoyed the coaching. (Kieran, interview one, added emphasis)

Once again, Kieran refers to the wider enabling structures which facilitated his pathway into practising within a formalised coaching role and then a post-athletic coaching role. For all of the accidental coaches like Kieran, it was identified that the structures surrounding them were the overriding factors behind their transition into a coaching career. Kieran further explained the influence of the club and its employees concerning his 'access

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<sup>61</sup> Emphasis is made on 'their own choosing'. It was recorded that as part of their youth contracts the participants across both sports had attained a level one coach certification because the clubs which they were contracted to had registered them onto these qualifications in adhering to some of the fields' policies and legislation.

route' into a coaching pathway:

Well I retired in the summer through injury, so May time, and (current Championship Football Club 1) have *offered*, well they *offered* me a coaching role, because my [playing] contract was expired with them... I never really, like probably most footballers thought about, you know, well *I didn't really see myself going into coaching*. And then through the injury at (current Championship Football Club 1) they've really sort of *supported me and pushed me* to get involved with the coaching, particularly (name 1 – Academy Director) who is an ex-player as well, he's in charge of the academy... And at the current time I'm the manager of the under sixteens at the academy full-time and so it's just worked out quite well for me at the minute... Like I said *I've never sort of pushed myself to go into that area* [coaching], I've never had any sort of aims and you know I've *fallen into it* a little bit at the minute so I'm going to take it as far as I can. (Kieran, emphasis added, interview one)

Like Kieran, the other accidental coaches noted how their pathways into either their first formalised or first post-athletic coaching role were heavily supported, and even to some extent instigated by 'significant others' who worked within the club which they were contracted to. As Kieran highlighted, his own career trajectory into his first post-athletic coaching role was with the same club he had last competed for. Akin to other coaches, Kieran claimed he was *offered* the position without having to negotiate any formalised recruitment processes. This career pathway reflected many of the other accidental and aspirational coaches. It is this theme of 'athletes drawn through' by their clubs which the next section analyses.



### 6.4.3 ‘A coaching job just fell into my lap’: Clubs drawing athletes through from athlete to coach

A theme contributing to the elite athlete to high-performance coach pathway was the existing connections between the study participants and their clubs. As shown overleaf in table 13, at the time of the first phase interviews, 13 out of 15 coaches had been ‘drawn through’ as an athlete into a coaching role by the *same* club they had either *first* or *last* represented. In eight of these 13 cases, the participants had either gained these coaching roles within the same club they had *last* competed for, or, who they were still contracted to as an athlete at the time of the first phase interviews (see Sonny, Billy and Kieran’s quotes in tables eight [p.184] and nine [p.187] as examples). For the remaining five cases out of the 13, the coaches returned to the club where they had *started* their career as a junior and where they had achieved their first professional athletic contract. The two exceptions to this particular pathway were Henry and Casper (table 13, p.213).

As has been previously mentioned, Henry was one of two participants who was contracted as a competitive-athlete at the time of the second phase interviews. Henry had attained a part-time coaching role with a local college RU team which acted as a ‘feeder team’ to his first professional RU club (see Henry’s data in table 12 [p.208] for more information on the Henry’s context). Casper on the other hand was the anomaly, as he was offered a head coach role by a semi-professional club for whom he had never competed.

**Table 13 Location of first formalised coaching role of each participant**

| Sport    | Pseudonym | First formalised coaching post was at the <u>last</u> club contracted to as a player | First formalised coaching post was at the <u>first</u> professional club contracted to as a player | Other information  |
|----------|-----------|--|--|--|
| Rugby    | Sonny†    | Yes - community and academy  |  |  |
|          | Henry**   | No   | No   | College academy coach – college team was affiliated to Henry’s first club and which acted as a ‘feeder team’ |
|          | Casper*   | No   | No   | DoR at an alternative amateur club which Casper had not represented  |
|          | Rory*     |  | Yes - joint head coach of senior men’s team  |  |
|          | Conrad*   |  | Yes - position specific coach  |  |
|          | Calvin**  |  |  |  |
|          | Mark*     |  |  |  |
|          | Greg*     |  |  |  |
|          | Billy*    |  |  |  |
|          | Connall*  |  |  |  |
|          |           |  |  |  |
| Football | Kieran*   | Yes - academy U18 coach  |  |  |
|          | Eamon*    |  | Yes - academy U16 coach  |  |
|          | Tim*      |  | Yes - academy U16 coach  |  |
|          | Owen*     |  | Yes - academy U16 coach  |  |
|          | Stuart*   | Yes – head academy coach   |  |  |

†Participant was still a competitive athlete at interview one and had retired during the intervening period between interview one and two.

\* Participants had retired from competitive play and had gained a ‘post-athletic coaching role’ at the point of interview one.

\*\*Participants were still competitive athletes at the time of the interview one and two and therefore only fulfilled ‘formalised coaching roles’ alongside their competitive athletic careers.

Iterations one and two identified clubs to be an enabling structure to suggest why the coaches undertook the pathway of attaining a coaching role within their *first* or *last* clubs. The results within iterations one and two were grounded in current or former athletes sharing a similar habitus to the club members and therein the clubs which they all represented. The appointment of current athletes or former athletes was based on preferences associated to

‘taste’ (Bourdieu, 1984) as senior and academy directors profiled whether or not the athletes embodied the same values and characteristics of the club’s identity. On this point it is worthwhile reiterating Kirk’s statement that initially outlined this theme in iteration one (section 5.3.4):

I often look up at senior players who for me extol the values of what it’s like to be (local area name) blah blah blah. *I offer them jobs* within the community team that if they delivered in there then they can one day move into the [senior] coaching team. (Kirk, emphasis added, iteration one)

Many of the coaches within the present iteration did recognise the support from senior board members, coaching staff, and academy directors who enabled them to access their first formalised or post-athletic coaching opportunities with their clubs. Yet no coach openly stated that clubs drawing athletes through into coaching roles was an explicit or implicit strategy of any kind. Moreover, none of the coaches could provide any reasons for why as athletes they had to practice as coaches within the community departments, other than they were ‘obliged’ to as part of their contracts with the clubs (section 6.4.1).

A similar theme was identified by those who were classified as aspirational coaches when probed on their thoughts on why they were offered either their first formalised coaching roles or post-athletic coaching roles by club representatives. Here, the coaches could not fully define or explain the merits for why they had been approached and ultimately appointed in these coaching roles other than stating: “the opportunity arose” (Billy, interview one); “a coaching job just fell into my lap” (Casper, interview one); “I’ve just fallen into it” (Connall, interview one); “you know I’ve fallen into it a little bit at the minute so I’m going to take it as far as I can” (Kieran, interview one), or; “as I was playing I never thought too much about the coaching and then fell into it at (current Championship football club 1)” (Kieran, interview two). This suggests that during the time employed as a competitive-athlete, the coaches were unaware of the coaching talent identification and profiling practices undertaken by the senior and academy directors’ when judging prospective coaching abilities

for drawing them through into coaching roles. The conclusions of iterations one and two can explain the reasons for this lack of awareness in respect that these profiling practices and the basis of such coach appointments were performed at an intuitive subconscious level by the directors: “I think you just have a gut feeling, you just know someone” (Ian, AF academy director, iteration two, section 5.4.2, p.142).

Throughout the duration of the study, Calvin was a current first team RU athlete at a Championship club who had graduated from his same club’s academy many years ago. Within the first interview (table eight, p.184), Calvin explained his current employment status as: “I’m a full time professional rugby player at (Championship rugby union team 1) and I coach the academy backs twice a week”. Calvin’s old academy coach still upheld the same role within the same club. It was the same academy coach who approached Calvin and *offered* him his first formalised coaching role of working as a position specific coach that supported the academy coaches:

I was in the (Championship rugby union team 1) academy and... somebody who had a role in the academy when I was there, is still there, and he actually, *he asked me* if I would be interested in looking over some of the good academy players. And it kind of moved from there really and I kind of got a role with the academy then. (Calvin, emphasis added, interview one)

Billy was another who was offered a position specific coaching role with the first team at his last club which he had represented as an elite RU athlete:

...the *opportunity arose*, you know I wanted to give it a go and test myself at the highest level really... Initially I was *offered* the position as player stroke scrum coach with our previous coaches. (Billy, added emphasis, interview one)

The individuals who ‘offered’ these coaching roles have been categorised as ‘significant others’ and comprised as part of the broader social structures within the field of elite sport, but more specifically the semi-autonomous delimited field of each club. In contrast to Calvin and Billy, who attained coaching roles with their current or last clubs

which they represented as athletes, Owen, like four other participants, attained his first formalised coaching role at his first professional club (see table 13, p.213). Owen explained the recruitment process for his appointment:

About two months ago I had a phone call from an ex-colleague of mine who I played with at (current Championship Football Club 1), he's ended up going back to (current Championship Football Club 1) as a coach within the academy and he invited me in for a sort of briefing. And we ended up having a conversation and I started coaching there about a month ago, four days a week in the evenings coaching the under sixteens at the academy level, which is, it's nice to go back. Obviously I started at (current Championship Football Club 1) and it's nice to be going back there. And so many faces that I know from playing with and playing against over my career. And it's like, I mean football is such a small community you know, you're always crossing paths with each other in your career and it's sort of nice that I've ended up at (current Championship Football Club 1) with them (*sic*) people... (Owen, interview one)

Once again, even as an aspirational coach, in addition to the enabling structures surrounding Owen's position within the field of elite sport, the existing relationships Owen sustained within the delimited field of his first club underpinned his appointment. Owen also inferred that the appointment of his first formalised coaching role was facilitated by the social networks (Morrow & Howieson, 2014; Purdy & Potrac, 2014; Rynne et al., 2006, 2010) and in particular the institutionalised social capital (Rynne, 2014) which he had acquired and sustained throughout his competitive athletic career (Bourdieu, 1986). In this particular case Owen was recruited by an ex-team mate employed by Owen's first club. This was recorded as having made Owen's transition into coaching somewhat more fluent as he found his first formalised coaching role to be:

Quite enjoyable. I think what's made it easy is because I started out at this club, *I know* this club and *I know* the academy director, *I know* a lot of the coaches from playing with them because I started out at (current Championship Football Club 1)... (Owen, emphasis added, interview one)

The data suggested that prior socialisation into a clubs' specific delimited field was important when athletes transitioned into coaching roles (Lemyre et al., 2007). Owen's referring to the fact that he 'knew' the club and the social agents practising within it (i.e.

academy director and coaches) points to how the directors and athletes interacted within the same field of not only elite sport but the semi-autonomous delimited fields of each club. Referring once again back to the findings of iteration one and two, it is practice as an athlete within the field of elite sport and each club which enabled the novice coaches to acquire embodied cultural and symbolic capital that was perceived to be relevant for converting to practice as a coach (Bourdieu, 1986). In turn, the field's cultural capital and values were both subconsciously and consciously acquired by the participants during their careers as athletes which brought the maintenance of social capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986).

It is once again worthwhile relating how this theme within the present iteration reflected the themes that emerged from the previous two iterations. In particular, within iteration one, Keith had expressed the value of appointing coaches who had practised within the same field as him, as this provided Keith with a view that they shared a habitus which was embodied by their coaching and playing philosophies:

A lot of people that I've used are actually people I know and trust already... I haven't gone too far outside of people I don't know... So I've kind of stuck with really people that I know and trust. So either people that I've played with, friends with but I know have a good rugby background, have the same ideas and philosophy as me, how the game is. That's key, if they don't have the same ideas and philosophy there's no point bringing them to the club because we are not going to get on. (Keith, RU senior director, iteration one, section 5.7)

Academy Director Quentin upheld similar views in regards to trust and a shared habitus: "So if you can't trust someone, you don't know what they are up to, and well, you can't trust someone if you don't know them. How's that good for the kids?" Within the current iteration, Rory was another participant who returned back to his first club to fulfil his first post-athletic coaching role. Rory was categorised as an accidental coach as he had not fulfilled a formalised coaching role during his time as a professional athlete, nor had he obtained any coaching qualifications before registering onto the RFU's 'senior pros' level three course (table 12, p.208). To attain his first post-athletic coaching role, Rory was the

only participant to exercise his own agency and approach a club to seek a coaching appointment. Rory provided the following reasons why he chose to return back to his first club:

...I'm going back to a team called (current semi-professional rugby football club 1). They are a team I played for when I was a kid and I stayed there until I was twenty-four so *I know* quite a few people down there and I'm intending on going back down there next season because I need to do my level three (coaching qualification) and I think it's a good place to go and work. And they've got the whole team, the whole club is a big family club so I like that because I think that's where I want to incorporate my playing philosophy. (Rory, emphasis added, interview one)

Familiarity with a specific delimited field was a reason why participants returned to their first club to fulfil their first formalised or post-athletic coaching role. As Rory noted, familiarity was perceived by the coaches to bring added confidence for practicing as a coach, not only in terms of familiarity with individuals but for the more ephemeral features of the social norms, subcultures and regimes of truth (i.e. coaching and playing philosophies) pertaining to that particular field. From a structural perspective, iterations one and two signified the amount of embodied cultural and symbolic capital the coaches had accumulated throughout their competitive-athletic careers, but significantly from within the delimited field of representing the same club, which meant that it was appealing for clubs and the social agents representing them to appoint past and present athletes in coaching roles. The embodied cultural capital athletes and prospective coaches continued to exhibit also supported the sustainment of institutionalised social capital and the networks of significant others who facilitated coaching pathways (Morrow & Howieson, 2014; Rynne, 2014). The importance of maintaining social networks with club representatives, who have in the present study been categorised as 'significant others' was a theme which contributed to developing the study participants' coaching and playing philosophies and thus coaching identities. It is the theme of developing these philosophies which the discussion now covers.

#### **6.4.4 Development of a coaching and playing philosophy: A coaching habitus?**

Based on the findings from the first two iterations, the coaches were questioned within the first phase of interviews on the theme of what their coaching and playing philosophies were and how these had been developed (table 10, p.192). Iterations one and two identified how a coaching and playing philosophy was seen by senior and academy directors to constitute a coach's habitus, and thus, a coach's identity (Zehntner & McMahon, 2014). Athletes embodying a habitus which reflected the field's values through practices of hexis were assigned with enhanced levels of embodied symbolic and cultural capital by others practising within the field of elite AF and RU. The species of capital were judged to be converted into embodied cultural and symbolic capital relevant for a coach's role by senior directors (section 4.3.2) and to a lesser extent the academy directors (section 5.4.2). This form of embodied cultural and symbolic capital was identified to be of value in denoting that such candidates had a 'cultural fit' with the club and was a reason for the preferred recruitment processes of drawing their clubs' competitive-athletes through into coaching roles.

When the coaches entered into a post-athletic coaching career they did not seem to consciously recognise the importance of a 'cultural fit' concerning the value that their own coaching and playing philosophies reflected (or needed to reflect) the clubs which appointed them. In short, the coaches did not recognise their own process of hexis. This lack of awareness signifies how this initial formation of their philosophies and dispositions towards coaching aligned to Bourdieu's (1984) conceptualisation of habitus formation, as the coaches acquired and then embodied the dispositions and beliefs that underpinned their practices subconsciously (Light & Evans, 2013). Moreover, the operationalisation of practicing in a manner which reflected the club's playing and coaching philosophies was not initially acknowledged by the coaches when interviewed. Compounding this point was that



many of the coaches found it difficult to articulate their coaching philosophies. This was even the case for aspirational coaches such as Mark and Conrad who had been drawn through by their last clubs:

Mate, to be honest with you, I struggle to get my head around that really. I think because I wrote down a philosophy and I suppose it's changed a little bit but it's pretty much like my life philosophy is: you've got to work hard and enjoy it, if you don't work hard you won't succeed, if you don't enjoy it then you're not going to work as hard so it's pretty much that. (Mark, interview two)

Well, you see, because my attack philosophy would be to entertain by scoring tries and how you do that is by attacking certain defenders, and then go on and do that. That would be what my attack is all about. And how I would do it, in terms of my actual how I deliver, I, (extended pause), I'll be honest, I'm just trying to think about it, (extended pause), I've got it written down on my sheet, I've got it on my CV, (extended pause), I can't think, I've got it on a CV on my computer but I can't think, sorry. (Conrad, interview two)

Although Conrad found it difficult to articulate his coaching philosophy, he nevertheless referred to the distinction between this and a playing philosophy, albeit tentatively. Some of the participants conflated the terms by considering the output of playing strategies to be the process of coaching and pedagogical strategies (Cushion & Partington, 2014; Horsley, Cockburn & James, 2015). For example, Owen was one who misinterpreted the meaning of a coaching philosophy with the meaning of a playing philosophy:

*Alex: Ok, and one thing I'm really interested in is coaching philosophies and particularly how people like yourself have developed those. How have you developed yours?*

**Owen:** I think a coaching philosophy is what formation is and or what team did I like playing in most, and what way did I enjoy my football. And to be honest the games I've watched and the players I've watched and other managers' philosophy, and I've looked at their principles in how they see the game. So I think from experiences definitely when playing in successful teams and when I played well in games or the seasons I've played well in, that's where I've got my philosophy. And it's usually, well it definitely is from managers that I enjoyed playing under and coaches I enjoyed playing under. (interview one)

The conflation between the two terms continued at the culmination of the 'senior

pros' courses for many of the coaches and most notably Owen:

*Alex: Right, and I ask the question to everyone, reflecting over the past year, what's your coaching philosophy then, has it changed to a great extent over the past year or has it remained the same?*

**Owen:** I'm still the same, I've felt even stronger because within my, when I have been playing for (current non-league football club 1) I've had a transition, I've had a new manager come in who has a similar philosophy but he's brought a more of a workman like ethic to get the end product that we are looking for. So my philosophy is the same, I like to play out from the back you know always looking to play through the middle, play through the thirds and just try to have comfortable players on the pitch that are comfortable in possession. (interview two)

Although Owen was categorised as an aspirational coach, he was still a novice coach with limited experience of having been in a coaching role. Nash, Sproule and Horton (2008) reported that novice coaches found it more difficult to articulate and comprehend their coaching philosophies in comparison to more experienced coaches. Instead, Nash and colleagues (2008, p.522) concluded that novice coaches did 'not appear to have a unified understanding of what it means to develop a coaching philosophy' as novice coaches prioritised their attention on performance outputs like strategies of play (see also Mallett et al., 2016). Indeed, the coaches' views within the present study, like Owen's, seemed to reflect this finding.

It must be noted that not all of the participants conflated the terms. Yet in once more mirroring the findings of Nash and colleagues (2008), it was found that the coaches as an overall group seemed to be more aware of, or were at least confident enough to speak on their views of performance outputs that resembled their playing philosophies over their coaching philosophies. They also seemed to be more secure in how they perceived their playing philosophies over their coaching philosophies as Owen's above statement denotes. Nonetheless, for those coaches who were able to make the distinction of a coaching philosophy, the values and beliefs associated with their coaching philosophies were directly related to their own perceived core values and identities, either as an athlete, coach or person.

This theme was captured by Tim and Calvin respectively:

...a playing philosophy is how you want the boys to play on the pitch, a coaching philosophy is how you interact and that stuff with the players. That's how I understand it... I think for me again your coaching philosophy is around your sort of *core values that sort of stick with you, it's who you are as a person really, your beliefs*. So, you know, although it's ['senior pros' level three course] made me sit down and really sort of articulate it, I don't think your core values change overnight really. (Tim, interview two, emphasis added)

I think mine's [philosophy] really developing. You know, like I said at the time it's something that you know *in built* really, but mine's all about getting the environment right, making sure that you know the people that you've got in your organisation are buying into, making it wholly successful... (Calvin, interview one, emphasis added)

Saying that coaching philosophies were considered to be “in built” and shaped by each coach’s “core values” that were unlikely to “change overnight” clearly denotes the value of Bourdieu’s habitus to explain how a coaching philosophy manifests itself in practice. That is, the transformation of a coach identity from an athletic identity was in part non-reflexive and thus embodied (Strandbu & Steen-Johnsen, 2014). Furthermore, in comparison to formal learning environments, competitive playing careers were seen by the coaches to be the most influential environment which informed their playing and coaching philosophies (Cushion et al., 2003; Irwin et al., 2004; Jones et al., 2003; Mallett et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 2006). Such a finding also echoes the results of Green’s (1998, p.140) analysis of PE teachers’ ‘philosophies’ to be ‘shaped largely by their lived experiences as PE teachers’. In the present iteration, therefore, the philosophies of the coaches were shaped largely by their lived embodied experiences as elite competitive-athletes. Casper, Billy and Henry explained this process:

It was important for me as a player, because I've played at, if I actually look at the list, when I did this for the exercise in looking at our playing philosophy and our coaching philosophy, when I looked at that I tried to draw on experiences throughout my career. You know it was a long career, about seventeen years and you look at the list of coaches I had, that I worked underneath, and it's literally a who's who of world class coaches. And yet do I think they are world class coaches? No. (Casper, interview one)

I've tried to take the best out of the best sides that I've played in and tried to apply that to my coaching philosophy. (Billy, interview one)

So I suppose, well from my point of view it's the influence I had as a player; so from being at (current Premiership rugby club 1), the understanding that if you can get people to buy into a certain way of thinking and a certain style of play, it's a lot more powerful than individuals working towards the target; so if you get a collective buy in. (Henry, interview two)

Even though many of the coaches struggled to define their coaching philosophies within the first phase interviews, they did find it easy to define what they considered to be the characteristics of effective and ineffective coaching by being reflexive on their own athletic careers (Jacobs et al., 2016). Practice as a competitive-athlete appeared to be a domain within which participants were socialised to the fields' social norms (Cushion et al., 2003; Lemyre et al., 2007; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006) but also for judging coaching efficacy (Jones et al., 2004). Judging coaches during and after experience as an athlete shaped how the participants wanted to practice as coaches themselves (Nash et al., 2008). The coaches' intentions on how they aspired to coach did not only concern the pedagogical strategies but moreover their conduct and dispositions as approachable individuals when dealing with players on a man-management basis (Becker, 2009; Bennie & O'Connor, 2010; Collins, Gould, Lauer & Chang, 2009; Jones et al., 2003; Jowett & Carpenter, 2015; Rossi et al., 2016).

The emphasis which the coaches made upon man-management for attaining 'buy in' and athlete to coach respect coheres with the emphasis the senior and academy directors made. Henry and Greg respectively explained how their athletic experiences playing underneath coaches they admired informed them on their intentions towards coaching:

I think your coaching philosophy is what I said before, it's about creating your environment; the environment that you want to create is what I enjoy as a person. Now that as I said has been shaped by certain people but a lot through playing experiences, you know, what's worked well for me as a player. It's someone that I can come up to and talk to, someone that is approachable, someone that knows what they want but you have respect for at the same time. So that's what kind of shapes

it. (Henry, interview one)

It comes from when I was playing. Again, it comes back to how I was treated you know, how I was handled and it comes back to that. You know the way you talk to players and the way you communicate with players. (Greg, interview two)

Both Henry and Greg were categorised as aspirational coaches. When developing their own coaching philosophies and identities aspirational coaches were seen to be more reflexive on their athletic careers in contrast to being reflexive on their own direct coaching experiences gained from their introductory or formal coaching roles. Conrad highlighted this:

I'll probably be working with players who have got as much experience as me or more skill than me... And hopefully I'll be able to draw on different things that I've learnt as well from my playing career, and *obviously to a lesser extent my early coaching years* to help me become a better person, to help me and the team to become particularly successful. (Conrad, interview one, emphasis added)

The data suggested that for aspirational coaches, the direct coaching experiences of introductory and formalised coaching roles were not experiences that contributed to the development and consolidation of a coaching identity more quickly in comparison to the accidental coaches who did not practice in the same formalised coaching roles. Confounding this view was when aspirational coaches, like Conrad and Kieran, considered themselves as very much inexperienced novice coaches: "I appreciate that I've got to start at the bottom and work my way up so that's what I'm trying to do" (Conrad, interview one); "I see it as a bit of an internship, you know I'm still getting qualified" (Kieran, interview one). Subsequently, Rory's view as an accidental coach on the value he attributed onto other aspirational coaches having practiced in formalised coaching roles alongside their own competitive-athletic careers was not a strong theme that was grounded within the rest of the data:

I think for me, because I'm such a, I am a blank canvas, I've not done a lot of coaching, I think some of the boys who've been on level two [coaching qualification]

and done that years ago and have had teams for years, I think that they are set in their way and it's a bit harder for them to adapt and change; whereas because I haven't really done anything it's really useful for me this course ['senior pros' level three] because I didn't really know that there's four different types of coaching style (*sic*). I didn't really understand what was going on and now when I'm out on the field and I'm coaching I can be like oh I need to hang on a bit, I need to try to encourage them you know get the information out of them instead of give it to them. (Rory, interview one)

Aspirational coaches were not considered to engage in any significant deliberate practice (Erickson et al., 2007) or reflexive practices during their first formalised coaching roles for working on developing their coaching philosophies and overall coaching identities. The view that 'coaches learn on the job' in regards to their philosophical development can therefore be questioned for such a substantive population (cf. Erickson et al., 2008; Mesquita et al., 2014; Sherwin et al., 2017).

Mirroring the findings from iterations one and two, the coaches placed greater value on practical sense accrued from informal contexts of a competitive-athletic career in contrast to explicit pedagogical knowledge accrued from formal coach education courses (McLean & Mallett, 2012). Casper's comments within his first interview clearly depicted the limited value he attributed to formal NGB coach education courses which he had attended during his competitive-athletic career:

...because part of the elite level as a player is you go straight in at level two and level two is a piece of piss, I only did it last year so I know what it's like... No I've never been taught how to coach, I just purely rely on instinct I suppose from just years and years of playing rugby as a player" (Casper, interview one).

The lack of value which the coaches initially ascribed to lower level formal coaching qualifications was because many participants only viewed NGB coaching courses of level two and below as a political structure which they were required to negotiate (Christensen, 2013) in order to make the transition into a post-athletic coaching role more fluent:

I retired at the end of 2012 and I'd only just done my level two coaching but I didn't really want to coach but I thought I might as well do it because to have it on the CV (Casper, interview one).

Such a theme corresponded somewhat to Oliver's view in iteration one (section 4.3.3.) of formal NGB coaching qualifications representing nothing more than as "hygiene factors": a tick box exercise for legislative purposes.

Because they valued informal learning environments in terms of developing their coaching knowledge and philosophies (Cushion et al., 2003, 2010; Erickson et al., 2008; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2015; Wright et al., 2007), the coaches considered it to be advantageous to know how to be reflexive about their own athletic careers when interpreting how they judged their previous coaches (Becker, 2009; Sherwin et al., 2017). The ability to reflect back on their own competitive-athletic experiences and project these forward when developing a new coach identity was a feature which all of the coaches considered as beneficial: "I've learnt a lot about myself, because I can step back into the football mode, the player mode and reflect on how I would have felt had I been in that situation" (Owen, interview two). On this basis, the coaches recalled how they as elite athletes had profiled the dispositions and practices of coaches who they had performed under (Becker, 2009). Owen was one who explained this:

I've had several different managers over my time playing at (current Championship Football Club 1) and different youth managers, reserve managers... I guess you could say, I picked all of their good points up and I've learnt how to be a manager. (Owen, interview one)

Consequently, during their transition from an elite athlete to novice coach, many of the participants were reflexive agents who consciously modelled their coaching dispositions on their own previous coaches who they had respected (Bloom et al., 1998; Jones et al., 2003) and to whom they had thus assigned high levels of symbolic and cultural capital. The coaches seemed to be more reflexive of the negative features which their former managers and coaches had exhibited however (Jones et al., 2003; Sherwin et al., 2017). Owen explained this by stating:

But I've also learnt how not to be a manager. I've been weary of bad managers I've had and bad, how would I say it, habits; just the person you know, the negative managers. So I've learnt how not to be as well; so obviously that comes with the football knowledge. (Owen, interview one)

Current and former coaches' negative dispositions seemed to have more impact on informing the study's coaches of their own coaching identities. Yet practice as competitive-athletes within the field of elite sport and the semi-autonomous delimited fields of each club did not necessarily mean that the participants subconsciously conformed and consented to the practices of the fields' norms, or regimes of truth, in a way which was assumed by the senior directors.

I've seen negatives in coaches that I've had over the years that will then influence me not to be in that way. So I mean I can't say I'll go out and coach like for example, (name 1), who was one of my coaches. I'm not saying I'll go out and coach exactly like he did but I would say he had an influence on my coaching philosophy, my coaching style. (Rory, interview one)

Owen and Rory's view signifies how Bourdieu's habitus can be extended by not only being a passive construct but one which agents are consciously self-reflexive of when projecting future capabilities and dispositions (Noble & Watkins, 2003; Reay, 2004). In its original conceptualisation, the habitus is not seen to address conscious change because Bourdieu downplayed agential self-reflexivity as he prioritised uncovering the unconscious socialisation processes that produce agency habitus and practice (Strandbu & Steen-Johnsen, 2014). Recognition of this determinism has resulted in Adams (2006) hybridizing habitus and reflexivity. Here, Adams (2006) emphasised how an agent's self-reflexivity was indeed a conscious act for habitus development and enabling the habitus to change. McNay (1999) was another who advanced this line of analysis in her work on gendered identity as she highlighted that when agents move across fields the development and sustainment of habitus is sometimes problematised. In turn, this forces conscious acts of self-reflexivity. Such a thought reflects the processes the coaches were recorded to negotiate as they began to consciously reflect on how their previous coaches' practiced to inform them on their own



coaching intentions.

Continual analysis of the present iteration's data, however, meant that these conscious self-reflexive processes can be conceptualised with greater clarity through Foucault's (1988a) technologies of the self. After initially focussing his analysis on how bodies were normalised and socially controlled (Foucault, 1975, 1979, 1980), in his later work, Foucault (1997a, 1997b) centred his analysis on agency freedom and proposed that agents can 'challenge, transform and (re)create themselves within discursive power relations through enacting technologies of self' (McGannon, 2012, p.82). In order to create their coach identities, the coaches' self-reflexive strategies were manifested as a 'cultivation of the self comprised a set of practices designated by the term askesis' (Foucault, 1997b, p.99). Askesis is a technique of continuous introspection falling within the concept of technology of the self. It accommodates the changing of one's values and practices on the inside terrain against those discourses found within the outside terrain by connecting the individual as a subject with 'truth' in an attempt to make existing unknown knowledge (otherwise previously referred to as tacit knowledge – section 3.1.2.2) known<sup>62</sup>: 'what is wanted is to make the learned, memorised truth, progressively put into practice, a quasi subject that reigns supreme in us' (Foucault, 1997b, p.101). Part of this unknown but memorised knowledge are the discourses that individuals have been subjugated to as askesis denotes the 'exercises in which the subject puts himself in a situation in which he can verify whether he can confront events and use the discourses with which he is armed' (Foucault, 1988a, p.37). The intended outcome of this process is for a level of critical self-awareness of one's self to be attained and which can then be continuously transformed via the pursuit of aesthetic self-stylization.

Aesthetic self-stylization depicts 'a self that is open to change and the constant re-

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<sup>62</sup> Remembering Foucault's (1983a, p.208) post-structuralist inclination, 'truth' here is intended to depict how individuals recognise their own subjectivity in their selves from previously having been considered as docile bodies, created as a result of the strategies of 'objectification which transform human beings into subjects'.

creation of changing conditions of society' (Markula, 2004, p.307). Aesthetic self-stylization therefore represents the coaches' continued negotiation of their selves against structural constraints as Foucault continued to exhibit the potential to overcome the 'potentially debilitating effects of defining the self as discursively constituted while still acknowledging the external forces that operate it and shape it' (Infinito, 2003, p.156). The result of aesthetic self-stylization is the folding of both new and existing practices to create a new self. Here the introspective processes agents undertake are attempts to interrogate what may be considered as 'natural' in order to 'know oneself' (Markula, 2004; McGannon, 2012). Foucault (1986/1984b) terms this process as care of the self. As Infinito (2003, p.157) explains, care of the self 'brings the constructed or ethical self into being' and 'can be practiced only when there is sufficient liberty'. Within the context of the thesis, the 'liberty' which Foucault notes was afforded to the coaches by the format of the 'senior pros' coaching course as these actively encouraged candidates to employ technologies of the self by explicitly reflecting on their coach development (Erickson et al., 2007; Mallett et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 2006).<sup>63</sup> From these processes an agent's identity can be formed or transformed.

Through technologies of the self, the coaches emphasised the need to be 'true to their selves' whilst embracing their own 'individuality' when creating their coach identities.<sup>64</sup> The reasons for this were aligned to Foucault's (1997a) ethic of self care, as the coaches engaged in technologies of the self for the self-orientated purposes of acquiring and sustaining sufficient levels of athlete to coach respect, which then enabled the coaches to be considered as 'effective'. This was captured by Rory:

But I still think you need to be an individual because we are all different you know. You look around this ['senior pros' level three] course, now there's quite a few players that are all different, we all coach differently you know, some people are very 'tell' [autocratic] and that's what we are trying to do here is get a fair range of

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<sup>63</sup> Because reflexivity was centrally integrated into the 'senior pros' courses, this in itself brings reflexive practices to be a discourse and thus a technology of dominance (Cushion, 2016).

<sup>64</sup> The discussion on the theme of 'staying true to their selves' is forthcoming (section 6.4.6).

skills to do everything, but it's a lot harder than you think. (Rory, interview one)

Subsequently, throughout the remainder of the thesis, the terms 'reflexivity' or 'reflexive processes' denote the askesis and technologies of the self which the coaches engaged in. The terms in a Foucauldian sense also theoretically encapsulate the social processes the coaches negotiated in creating a coach identity from an athletic identity, which the hybridization of habitus and reflexivity is not judged to capture. Moreover, the final part of Rory's above statement also depicts the somewhat problematic transformational processes which some of the coaches encountered during their transitions into post-athletic coaching careers (Jones & Denison, 2016) and when negotiating their own 'individual' coach identity.

The theme of 'individuality' is in keeping with the findings taken from literature on coach development. In particular, Jones and colleagues (2003) conducted a life-history analysis on one perceived expert men's AF coach who conceded that initially replicating other coaches when first developing his own coaching identity was a mistake and that the coach needed to have an awareness of 'himself' in order to develop his own 'personal style'. In the second phase interviews, many of the participants in the current study also conceded that they had made this same mistake as the coach in Jones and colleagues' (2003) study. Consequently, the discussion now turns to theoretically analysing the difficulties the coaches encountered concerning the negotiation and consolidation of their own coach identities.

#### **6.4.5 Coaching philosophy and coach identity negotiation: The tension between agency and structure**

The present iteration's discussion, thus far, has outlined how the coaches had begun to develop a coaching and playing philosophy through their own social agency. This section reports and discusses an important finding of the project and one which originally contributes to extending the field's understanding of high-performance coach development and learning to be a culturally negotiated activity. That is, there was recorded to be cultural tension between the coaches' own aspirations on how they desired to create their coaching identities against the expectations and demands of the clubs in which they were situated. In such a light, the section addresses the agency-structure interaction between 'playing philosophy', 'coaching philosophy' and 'club culture' and the impact this had on the coaches' career pathways.

The fact that 13 out of the 15 coaches had been drawn through into coaching roles within their first or last clubs (table 13, p.213), resulted in this being identified as a treason why the study's coaches were largely unaware of their own coaching philosophies and identities at the point of the first phase interviews. In a Bourdieusian reading of the data, practising as competitive-athletes for the same clubs where the coaches' first formalised or post-athletic coaching roles were situated had meant the coaches had internalised and embodied their respective clubs' values. Consequently, because of this subconscious internalisation of the cultural norms, when the coaches practised in either their introductory or first formalised coaching roles, and even at the very first stages of their post-athletic coaching roles, this doxic belief pertaining to coaching and playing philosophies was uncritically adhered to by the coaches (Bourdieu, 1990). In a Foucauldian reading of the data, the coaches were docile to the institutions' (clubs') regimes of truth. Each club's regime of truth was considered logical by the coaches after they had been socialised to it during their competitive-athletic careers. As such, the coaches' identities as novice coaches were not only

constructed at the intersection of the subconscious and conscious level, but initially practiced at the intersection of a subconscious and conscious level too. It is for this reason that the senior and academy directors valued the practice of drawing through elite athletes into coaching roles.

The coaches' attendance on the level three 'senior pros' courses, however, was found to have provided them with the 'freedom' to be reflexive on these subconscious assumptions. Such reflexivity provoked the doxic culture or regimes of truth of each club to become challenged and in some cases contested (Leduc et al., 2012; Zehntner & McMahon, 2014). This means power can be regarded as a restrictive entity whilst concomitantly also having the capacity to be productive. Firstly, in Bourdieusian parlance, the participants became more consciously aware of their own investment within the field and thereby their own *illusio* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Secondly, in Foucauldian parlance, the coaches' subjectivation and folding of the inside and outside terrains meant they exhibited the ability to contest the clubs' disciplinary power (Deleuze, 1999/1986; Jagodzinski, 2008).

As has already been detailed (section 3.2.1), the Bourdieusian concept of *illusio* is taken to mean the extent to which individuals engage in reflexive practices, whether consciously or unconsciously (Evans et al., 2015; Hunter 2004) on the 'relationship between habitus and the field' to which the investment in the field is adjusted (Bourdieu, 1998b, p.3). As a result of the coaches' own conscious recognition of their investment within the field, upon the second phase interviews, the development of the coaches' 'own' philosophies was found to have been problematic. This was by account of the coaches having become more cognisant of the initially subversive discourses of the clubs which they had spent the last 10 to 12 months practicing within. It is the balance between agency action and structural influence which this section analyses.

As a condition of attendance on the 'senior pros' course, all of the participants were required to practice as coaches on a regular basis in order to attain successful accreditation.

Therefore, since the first interviews, all of the participants had practiced as coaches in a number of delimited fields (table 14 and figure 12 [p.235]). Significantly, however, Casper and Calvin were the only study participants who had practiced as a head coach of adult semi-professional teams whereby they were principally responsible for their teams' performances: "I've gone in as a head coach role so I've completely dictated everything I suppose" (Casper, interview two); "I've had absolute complete control over what we were doing" (Calvin, interview two).

**Table 14 Roles and fields participants had directly practised in since interview phase one**

| Coaching Fields & Coaching Roles                 |                         |   |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Position specific coach - men's high-performance | Assistant academy coach | Amateur adults and youth coaches – position specific and general position coaches |
| Conrad <sup>1</sup> (RU)                         | Stuart (AF)             | Sonny (RU)  |
| Billy (RU)                                       | Owen <sup>1</sup> (AF)  | Rory <sup>1 &amp; 2</sup> (RU)  |
| Connall x2 (RU)                                  | Tim (AF)                | Mark <sup>1 &amp; 2</sup> (RU)  |
|  | Eamon (AF)              | Greg <sup>1 &amp; 2</sup> (RU)  |
|  | Kieran (AF)             | Calvin* (RU)  |
|  | Henry (RU)              | Casper* (RU)  |
|  |                         | Conrad <sup>1, 2, 3 &amp; 4</sup>   |
|  |                         | Owen <sup>2</sup>   |

<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup> denotes additional roles practiced over the time of year (refer to figure 12 [p.235] for exact field location)

\* denotes participants who practiced as a head coach.

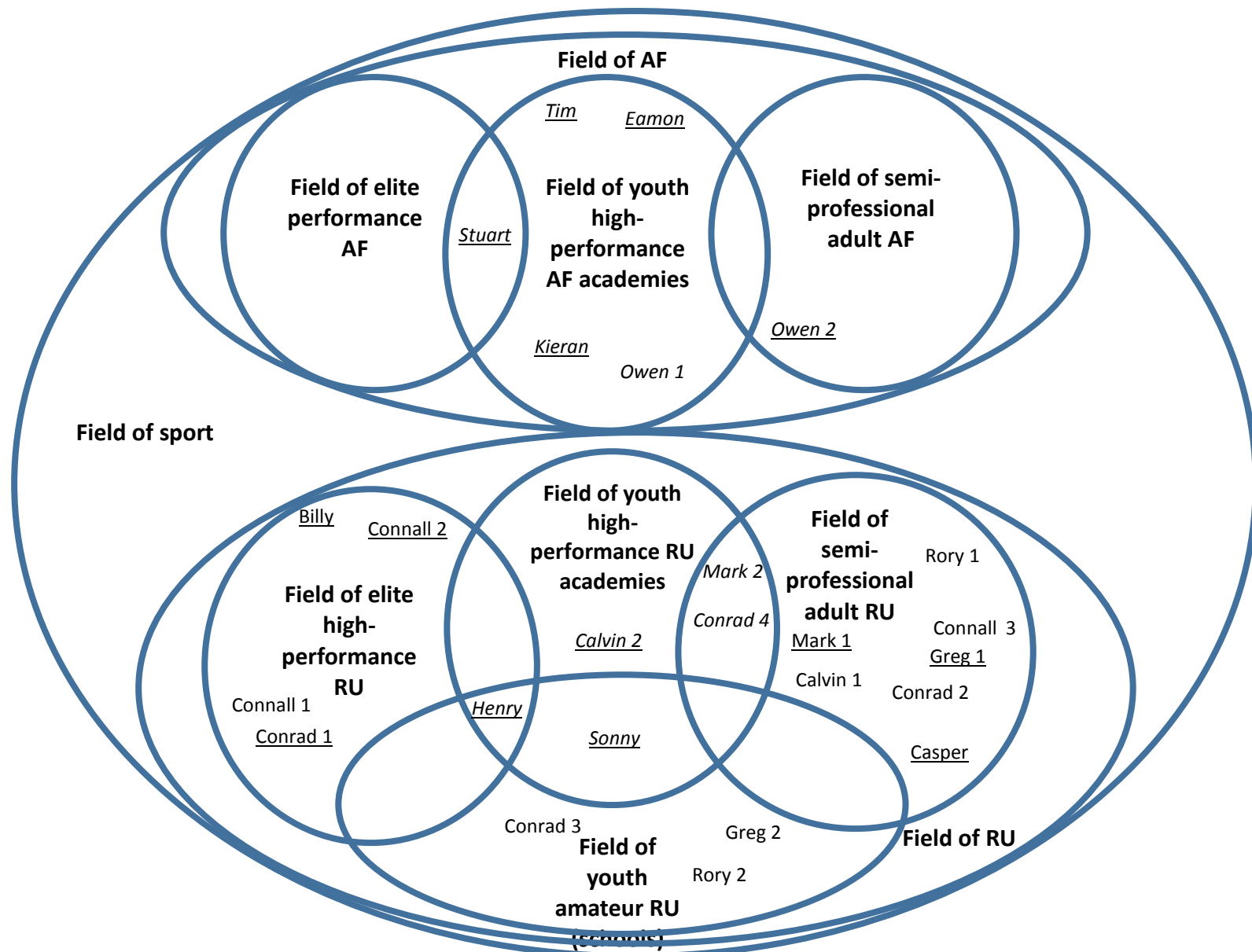
The coaching roles each coach occupied during the intervening period between interview one and two are illustrated in figure 12 (p.235). Each participant's final coaching role at the point of the second interviews is represented with underlined text. The text that is not underlined shows the location of the temporary coaching roles the coaches had occupied in order to gain more direct coaching experiences. A clear distinction can be seen between the numbers of temporary coaching roles each RU coach experienced in contrast to the AF coaches. The locations of the RU coaching roles were more diverse compared to the AF

coaches. The interview data suggested that this was because the RU coaches did not have the financial reserves to work voluntarily within a youth academy, nor were the RU academies in a financially strong enough position to pay the coaches, unlike the AF coaches. Conrad explained how these constraints forced him to seek multiple coaching roles:

Yeah exactly, basically I'm just scratching a living. The (Premiership rugby union club 1) team, the team that excites me the most, but they've got no money so it's a case of I need to scrape together a living and also gain some coaching experience. So the other opportunities, two of them have come up and I've taken them and the third one I'm hoping to sort out in the next couple of weeks. (Conrad, interview one)

Consequently, as figure 12 illustrates, seven out of the ten RU coaches interviewed considered it necessary to seek additional coaching roles away from the fields of youth high-performance academies. Moreover, as Conrad's above statement details, six of these RU coaches occupied multiple coaching roles at the same time in order to earn a satisfactory wage whereas only one (Owen) out of the five AF coaches undertook this career trajectory for this reason.

Figure 12 has also been constructed in such a way to illustrate the relationship between each delimited field the coaches were situated within during their coaching experiences. The field of sport is presented at the macro-level and consumes the separate fields of RU and AF. Encompassed within these fields are the delimited fields of: elite performance which denotes the men's senior team competition; youth high-performance academies, and; semi-professional adult competition. An additional field of youth amateur rugby was included only for RU as this consisted of public school rugby teams where some of the RU coaches occupied coaching roles. Amateur youth AF was not recorded as a field in which the AF coaches had occupied any coaching roles. It is indeed a finding that is perhaps suggestive of the social class divisions between the two sports within the UK and highlights the unequal distribution of economic capital as the present study identified RU clubs and athletes to have limited funds in comparison to AF (Collins, 2009; Dunning & Sheard, 2005; Taylor, 2013).



Legend –

*Italicised text* = coaching roles working underneath senior academy coaches. Underlined text = location of final coaching role at interview two

**Figure 12 Map situating the coaches' fields of practice for their coaching roles between interview one and interview two**



The individuals who had practised within the delimited fields of RU and AF high-performance youth academies (italicised text in figure 12) had all been accountable to the academy directors and had worked alongside senior lead coaches in a staffing structure which reflected Ian's academy structure: "...they won't go straight in, they will shadow, they will go with someone who has got a bit of experience, who's more experienced" (Ian, Academy Director, iteration two, section 5.4.4). Excluding Calvin and Casper, all of the coaches shadowed senior coaches when first entering the respective fields. Senior coaches acted as informal mentors and were regarded to have a substantial amount of influence on the coaches' development (Zehntner & McMahon, 2014). Greg and Connell's responses were indicative of the samples when asked to describe who or what they considered had been most influential on their coach development:

...the person I work the most with is my Director, and I, well I learn from him. He's been in the trade for a quite a long while now. So I'm not taking anything away from the RFU guys [coach educators and mentors], you know they've got their own methods, I'm not saying it's wrong but he's [Director] somebody I've spent a long time with, like nearly every second day I'm with him so of course I'm going to listen to him and learn from him... (Greg, interview one)

My Director at the club, I think I would say the Director at the club and school, both those two because of their experience; experience as coaches, players, ex-players, but I've learnt a lot from them. Yeah they are the two key role models for me that I learn from. (Greg, interview two)

No it's certainly not the coaching qualifications, the biggest impact on my coach development was when I worked at (school name 1), and I worked very closely with the Director of Sport, a gentleman called (name 1) who had worked for rugby, he was a (current Premiership rugby club 4 - and Connall's former club) academy coach, England students coach and now he was Director of Sport at (school name 1) and he really was my mentor. (Connell, interview two).

More value was placed on the interactions with informal mentors in contrast to formal mentors assigned by the formal 'senior pros' coach education courses (Jones et al., 2003, 2004; Mallett et al., 2016; Stoszowski & Collins, 2015; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). As the above quotes show, these informal mentors had been situated within the same delimited-field the coaches had practiced within. The effect on the coaches' development

was profound and seen to be beneficial:

...it's just being in that environment and watching other coaches coach different age groups... So I think observation and just reflecting on feedback of what I've received from my [informal] mentor, (name 1), whatever he said to me I could do better and I've taken on board everything. I think just being open minded and trying to have as much contact as possible on the training ground, even if it means I'm on a day off possibly going in and watching another age group which I have done so. (Owen, interview two<sup>65</sup>)

...yeah so I think watching people and then being able to try and copy some of the styles they use (Henry, interview two)

Research (Bloom et al., 1998; Cassidy et al., 2006; Cushion et al., 2003; Jones et al., 2009; Nash & Sproule, 2009) has reported how novice coaches utilise senior coaches to help substantiate coaching philosophies. Such interactions have been considered to provide long lasting influences on coaches' philosophies. The impact the informal mentors had was further facilitated by the fact that the coaches also had pre-existing relationships with them (Rynne et al., 2006, 2010). These relationships had first been established during the coaches' competitive-athletic careers (Purdy & Potrac, 2014). Informal mentors were considered by the coaches as better sources of knowledge because a shared playing and coaching philosophy had already been established. In a Foucauldian lens, docility to coaching and playing strategies solidified the participants' relationships with their informal mentors. Indeed, as iteration two had identified, trust was an important feature for the academy directors and was a rationale why current or former club athletes were drawn through into academy coaching roles instead of recruiting external candidates (section 5.4.2). The same amount of trust was not always established between the coaches and their formal mentors. The two statements taken from Billy's first and second interviews illustrate this concern:

...I've got a mentor now, I think I've got (name 2) who I've not met yet so you need to build up a bond with your mentor first before you discuss this sort of thing.

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<sup>65</sup> For clarification, Owen referred to his ex-team-mate as his informal mentor. This individual was the person who recruited Owen as a coach. Owen's forthcoming quote further describes what he considered his mentor to be (p.238).

Because you know, it's not the sort of thing you can just go blurting out everywhere, you've got to be able to have confidence in the person you are speaking to. Like I couldn't talk like this openly telling you all of the things I'm telling you if I hadn't signed the [participant consent – Appendix H] agreement you know beforehand, that you [researcher] can't say names or words, otherwise you know I couldn't be very open with you about these things. (Billy, interview one)

Yeah I've had a chat to my mentor about how's it gone this season and bounced things off him but I think for actual problems you're having with your coaching, I don't think it's that effective role. I don't know, it's something like this environment you don't want to be ringing up somebody who you don't know that well. You know, how can you really trust them, to tell them all of your problems? If I rang up my mentor and said, oh you know, I'm having problems with this that and the other and it's in the press or it's on Twitter or Facebook or anything the next day, it comes back to you and you could lose your job over it. (Billy, interview two)

The reservations which Billy held towards his relationship with his formal mentor were not held by all of the coaches. Nevertheless, there was a recorded preference of utilising informal mentors to aid development and transitions into a post-athletic coaching career. Indeed, it was these informal mentors who were in the majority of cases the individuals who drew the coaches through into their post-athletic coaching roles (Rynne, 2014) and acted as the 'enabling structural mechanism' for facilitating the 'fast-tracked' elite athlete to high-performance career pathway. Owen described the process for his appointment:

There has been a mentor so to speak because obviously I was new to the [academy] system. The actual head of the under sixteens, (name 1), he's an ex-team mate, we played together at (current Championship football club 1) 15, 16, 17 years ago and he's someone I've always kept in touch with. And it was actually (name 1) that offered me the job last year and he's mentored, helped me, he's advised, he's lead, he's observed my sessions, he's let me take lead roles in sessions; I mean he's taken a step back to observe me, and after games and training sessions he's had conversations with me regarding sort of feedback situations where he would tell me what he thought I'd done well or where he feels I could improve. So I think I've really thought of myself as lucky because obviously he's mentored me so to speak and helped me out. (Owen, interview two)

The results generated from iteration two once more came to the fore regarding the culture which some of these informal mentors and senior coaches had governed within their delimited fields. Such mentors governed a collaborative culture which can be judged as a

form of lateral surveillance (Foucault, 1988a). Henry and Billy's statements signify how their informal mentors did this:

We always review after a session, even if it is just walking across the field discussing. We might say, what you did there, I think you might have said the session was good but the way that you delivered it wasn't too good... (Henry, interview two)

We are all built to challenge each other and I think if you've got that sort of environment where you can challenge each other, and you may not always get what you want from it, but that's the sort of environment that hopefully is going to breed success. (Billy, interview two)

Continued practice within these culturally governed environments, however, was considered to evoke tensions on the novice coaches' own development: "you want to be what *you* want, to follow *your own* sort of path, but you've got to do it with someone else holding your hand effectively" (Mark, interview two, added emphasis). A reason for these recorded tensions was because the coaches engaged in technologies of the self and aesthetic self-stylization as a result of their attendance on the 'senior pros' courses and engagement with their assigned formal mentors.

The second phase interviews revealed how the coaches had become more reflexive and cognisant of the subcultural and discursive messages which were being imparted to them by the senior coaches. Consequently, some of the coaches had encountered what Barker-Ruchti and colleagues (2014, p.125) termed a 'paradigmatic conflict' concerning the consolidation of their own coaching and playing philosophies which therein affected the development of their own coaching identities (Horsley et al., 2015). Billy was an accidental RU coach who was drawn through into a senior coaching role by the team he last competed for as an athlete. He succinctly summarised how he interpreted this issue:

Well it's just got to a certain degree, I'd always like to say more things about the team play but I'm not in overall charge of the team at the moment so my philosophy tends to be my boss' philosophy if you know what I mean. Individually you try to bring some flair into your department but overall when it comes game time it's not yours, you have to alter your philosophy to the boss' really. (Billy, interview two)

When attempting to consolidate ‘their own’ coaching identities, the increased level of reflexivity and aesthetic self-stylization exposed some of the regimes of truth which the study’s novice coaches had to negotiate (Leduc et al., 2012). Kieran highlighted how the issue affected his coach development and employment status. Between the time of the first and second interview, Kieran had been made redundant as an academy coach from the Championship AF club. It was the same club he had last competed for as a professional athlete and who had drawn him through into a post-athletic coaching role. The reason for his redundancy was associated with how Kieran interpreted his coaching and playing philosophies to not complement those of his club, chiefly his academy director’s philosophy. Quoting Kieran at length provides the full context of the social process that affected his career pathway:

...I don’t believe my way of working or philosophy fit in with the Academy Manager who was there at the time. And that is one of the reasons why I subsequently lost my job, and the under eighteens manager did who I played with, as we had a different view to the Academy Manager. And that’s one of the reasons why I’m not there anymore. So you know it is a strong point, you know you have got to toe the line sometimes and that’s the difficult thing. I think being an ex-professional your opinions have always been strong and you know I’d rather be sat here now knowing I tried to do it how I wanted to do it and sort of learn from the courses that I’m doing you know. I didn’t back down, or I wouldn’t back down to someone I don’t agree with really... Yeah so that’s the difficult thing really because yeah your philosophy, although they encourage you on the courses to develop your own, you tend to have to fit in with your job or where you’re actually coaching so that’s a difficult one really... you have meetings and you get told how to do things and you know sometimes you’ve got to bite your tongue, but sometimes you can’t. So that was another thing like you are talking about, how has the job been and stuff, that’s one thing I’ve learnt is you know you have to toe the line a bit more than what you did as a player you know. (Kieran, interview two)

Sonny’s experience was comparable. Sonny had retired as a competitive-athlete since the first phase interview but had been categorised as an aspirational coach after he had practiced within formalised coaching roles during his competitive-athletic career and had attained his level two coach certification prior to registering onto the level three ‘senior pros’ course (see table 12, p.208). Within the second interview, Sonny recalled how after he had

practised as an assistant coach for a regional academy youth team (which took the form of a 'feeder team' for his last Premiership RU club) he had become more reflexive of his own position as an agent situated within the structure of the club:

**Sonny:** Yeah as part of my level three, you know, that was one of the points of my coaching philosophy seminar, and that was I didn't want outside influences to change my way of coaching.

**Alex:** *And when you say outside influences...?*

**Sonny:** Just like maybe the spectators, the mums and dads, the guys above, you know, the head coach just above me. Yeah those things. And I have sort of at times feel I have fallen into you know 'their' trap a little bit. But you know it's tough. For example, at the older boys where I'm coaching, the senior boys you know, the Head Coach there wants a specific way to coach the boys. For example, (name 1 - Head Coach), he wants the boys to come up [to defend] hard. And then, you know, I don't really want it to be like that because I don't think they've got the right skills, they haven't got the trust in each other yet as a group to be able to do that sort of defence. So I try to then persuade them, to show them the difference of doing this to that, and then trying to work on the coach himself, which you know I get a lot of yeah, yeah, yeah, which means he doesn't want it to be like that. And I know I do fall [in line], I have to follow orders sometimes which I do find a lot harder, but it still doesn't convince him. I still believe in what I think but sometimes the little bit of me, you know, doesn't necessarily want the players to fail, but I want the coach to see what he's trying to coach them not come off. And then hopefully he comes round saying to change it to this, but not saying it was my idea, but you know. (Sonny, interview two)

Such cases illustrate how the coaches encountered a juncture whereby their 'own' coach identities began to conflict with their respective club's. The assumed 'cultural fit' held by the senior and academy directors, which had been based on a perceived docility of the coach, was increasingly questioned by some of the coaches. The coaches' attendance on the 'senior pros' level three coach education courses was identified as a process which instigated the conflict as the courses provoked the coaches to develop a heightened level of self-reflexivity for developing their 'own' coaching philosophy and identities (Leduc et al., 2012). Tim explained how his AF 'senior pros' course encouraged him to be reflexive on explicitly developing his coaching philosophy (Nelson & Cushion, 2006):

I mean one of the things we had to do early on was produce a coaching philosophy, a preparation philosophy and a playing philosophy, so again it makes you really think about that, having to share it with people. (Tim, interview two)

These modes of reflexivity engendered a conflict with their respective clubs' regimes of truth in respect of how the senior and/or academy directors arbitrarily governed their values associated to playing and coaching philosophies. Although the participants recognised that they had to be disciplined, and thus act as a docile body by 'toeing the line' in order to fall in alignment with their respective club's philosophies/regimes of truth, those who encountered this juncture felt that continuing to practise in such a manner resembled a façade and thus diminished their level of credibility and ultimately efficacy as coaches. This was a prominent theme and one which the coaches had begun to become more consciously reflexive of and which the discussion now turns to.

#### **6.4.6 Consolidation of a coaching philosophy and identity: 'Be true to yourself otherwise players will see through you'**

Until now, the theoretical discussion of the data has orientated upon Bourdieu and Foucault's analytical tools as Goffman's concepts had less explanatory power. This section discusses how the data suggested the necessity of coaches to practice in an 'honest' disposition in order to attain athlete to coach respect. Here the data opposed Goffman's concepts of front and back stage impression management strategies as the coaches deemed this as a way of losing athlete to coach respect. In doing so, Bourdieu and Foucault's concepts are furthermore extended and taken forward for the development of a GT.

Experience as a competitive-athlete significantly shaped the coaches' aspirations for how they projected their aspirations in respect of how they wanted to practice. These

aspirations were based on the coaches' aesthetic self-stylization on how they interpreted ineffective and effective coaches from their competitive-athletic experiences. Akin to the findings of literature (Jones et al., 2003, 2004), the coaches found it difficult to model their own behaviours exactly on former coaches who they judged to be effective and who in many cases also took the role of informal mentors. Rory was one who expressed this difficulty:

I think you want to be the coach that you enjoyed playing for. You know I enjoyed playing for (name 1), purely because he was approachable. I had a lot of *respect* for him. He had ideas and that's how I see myself and that's who I would like to model myself on. And it's getting it across which is quite hard as a new coach because you've got all of these ideas and all of these brain waves and all these fucking ideas, let's redesign the wheel! But at the end of the day rugby is a simple game when you look at it. (Rory, interview two, emphasis added)

This difficulty was compounded by the recognition that the coaches possessed different personal qualities and characteristics to those who they aspired to practise like (Jones et al., 2003, 2004). This problematic disjuncture between the coaches' transformation of a new coach identity from an athletic identity can be potentially understood through Bourdieu's (2000) concept of *habitus clivé* and Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model of impression management.

Firstly, the belief of how a coach should act meant the adoption of alternative behaviours to what their true selves would normally employ. This can be initially conceptualised by Goffman's front and back stage (Partington & Cushion, 2012). The prioritisation which was placed by the coaches on practicing in an honest and empathetic disposition that was coherent to their coaching philosophies and identities was seen to conflict with attempting to mimic the practices of the coaches who they held in high regard. Instigated by the level three 'senior pros' courses, the participants' reflexive practices highlighted how the continued practice of impression management strategies brought the perceived possibility of losing their respect and credibility from the athletes: "There was a quote I read the other day, it's like better to have a thousand enemies outside your camp than



one inside your camp, and I think as long as you are *honest* and open then you'd be alright" (Greg, emphasis added, interview two). In this light, there was no strategic intention by the coaches to present an alternative front or façade toward their players other than just their 'honest' selves: there was no 'front' or 'back' stage like Goffman (1959, 1963) emphasised in his works (section 3.2.3).

Secondly, Bourdieu (2000) conceptualised the term *habitus clivé* to articulate the phenomena of individuals experiencing a sense of self torn due to their conditions of existence dramatically changing (Friedman, 2016). As novice coaches who modelled or even imitated senior coaches, the coaches practiced in an alternative disposition to what was considered as their true selves: *habitus clivé*. Yet *habitus clivé* was considered by Bourdieu (1999, 2000) in his later writings to be a very rare occurrence. This was by virtue of Bourdieu's former assertion that the dispositions of agents are derived from their *habitus* and that these dispositions were 'so durable that in the vast majority of cases they stayed unified through time' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.133). Nonetheless, if only for a short period of time, most of the coaches experienced a *habitus clivé*, or rather, exhibited an attempt to present an ulterior façade by trying to model their own dispositions on their previous coaches when they first practiced as a coach. During this period, the coaches were recorded to have felt 'uncomfortable' (see De Martin-Silva et al., 2015) on the basis that they were not necessarily being true to themselves as well as having begun to question the fields' *doxa*/regimes of truth (section 6.4.6). Such emotional experience at the agency level can be related to Bourdieu's (2000) notion of hysteresis.

Bourdieu (2000, p.161) argued the mismatch between *habitus* and field creates the dispositions of individuals to 'become dysfunctional and the efforts they make to perpetuate them help to plunge them deeper into failure'. McDonough and Polzer (2012, p.362) also claimed that hysteresis signifies the 'disparity between new opportunities associated with field change and agents whose *habitus* leaves them unable (temporarily, at least) to recognise

the value of new positions'. Analysis of the data revealed that hysteresis also temporarily affected the coaches who transitioned into coaching roles situated in other delimited fields like the fields of semi-professional adults or youth amateur (table 14 [p.233] and figure 12 [p.235], section 6.4.5).

Some coaches transitioned as competitive athletes situated within an elite high-performance field to practicing as a coach in the delimited fields of youth academies, adult semi-professional teams or youth amateur teams (table 14 and figure 12). This particular pathway was recorded to bring heightened levels of temporary hysteresis associated with the participants' acculturation from a competitive-athlete to novice coach. This was different from coaches who transitioned directly to a post-athletic coaching role that was situated into an elite adult high-performance field. The conditions and social expectancies of youth academy or semi-professional fields were different to the elite the high-performance field (Côté, 2006; Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Cushion, 2007; Cushion & Jones, 2014; Harvey et al., 2013; Jones & Wallace 2005; Sullivan, et al., 2012 – section 5.1.1). Therein, the fields' rules and regularities, and norms did not totally reflect the coaches' own habitus that had been generated from the elite high-performance field. For example, throughout the duration of the study, Calvin was an elite RU athlete who practiced as a specialist backs and kicking coach in his RU club's youth academy and supplemented this role by acting as a head coach of a semi-professional team. In regards to when Calvin first entered the new field of a semi-professional club, he recounted an episode that had characteristics of hysteresis:

So I'd only ever been experienced or been exposed to elite professionals, very driven people, you know very ambitious to get to where they can go because obviously their main source of income is rugby. Whereas the [semi-professional] players you know, they wanted to play completely socially and get drunk after the game and things like that. And I saw it as my role as to change tack... obviously I went in all guns blazing thinking it was just like a professional environment. And you know, *you realise that quite quickly, and I changed tack*. (Calvin, interview two, emphasis added)

Mark and Eamon experienced similar notions of hysteresis when commencing their

transitions into coaching within youth RU and AF academy fields respectively:

To be honest it has been quite tough. My last fifteen-twenty years have been in a professional environment where everything was geared towards getting three points on a Saturday. Everything was. You worked through the week for a goal at the end of the week, whereas within the academy system it's just about patience and developing [players]. (Mark, interview two)

I struggled to start with to realise that it wasn't, or it's not just about winning the games which was a massive thing. That was probably the biggest thing for me... So I wouldn't say I struggled massively, but it was on my mind. It was on my mind because you come from a winning environment, a winning mentality, because it's your job and the more you win the more rewards you get so it's difficult to rein yourself in and *it's like re-programming yourself*... if you come from a winning mentality as such, everything you know, winning is all that matters. As I said to you before, *you have to change yourself* a little bit because it's about developing the players, and yeah, that took a little bit of getting used to. (Eamon, interview two, emphasis added)

These cases illustrate the mismatch and lag between an agent's habitus and the changing rules and regularities of the fields which these coaches entered into (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Of note is how hysteresis was encountered for elite athletes who were drawn through into academy coaching roles within their first or last clubs they represented as athletes like Eamon and Mark's above quotes indicate. Eamon was one who attained his first post-athletic coaching role with the academy of his first club whilst Mark attained his first formalised coaching role at his last club. Yet the participants were recorded to overcome these experiences of hysteresis quickly. The reflexive practices which the formal coach education courses had stimulated, along with the informal reflexive practices the senior coaches and academy directors governed within their clubs' cultures facilitated overcoming this cultural lag and mismatch.

The application of Bourdieu's habitus *clivé* or Goffman's front and back stage impression management strategies did not seem to be entirely accurate when re-reading the data. This was because the coaches prioritised the value of 'staying true to themselves' instead of having a 'split coach personality' whereby their coaching practice did not truly

reflect their own core values. Upon the second phase interviews the coaches emphasised this theme and the process of acknowledging their own personal dispositions and building their own coaching identities around these. Greg discussed the importance of ‘staying true’ to his personality during his coaching practice and developing his coaching identity:

It comes back to if I have to live a *front*, I have to carry on with that, so I can’t copy you the whole time and live like you or coach like you all of the time. I want to be myself so I don’t have to turn a switch on every time I come to training and say I am Stuart Lancaster<sup>66</sup> again tonight and when I go home I am Greg you know. I’m Greg all the way through coaching, playing, whatever, and that’s how I see myself... Even if I go up into the Premiership or whatever set up, I’ll be myself... I’m not going to put up a *front* just to get approval off you. You know that’s the way forward you know, being myself, be honest with them [athletes] and be honest with myself. That’s the way I do things and then I get the *respect* that I’m getting now. So nothing has changed. (Greg, interview two, emphasis added)

Presenting a coaching front or façade which did not accurately portray their own dispositions, personality and true self was considered by the participants as making them susceptible to losing credibility and ultimately losing their athletes’ respect, irrespective of the level they coached. The value of the coaches possessing a competitive-athletic identity helped them have the insight (practical sense) to recognise this. Conrad expressed this point:

...I look back and honesty is the key. I remember a number of times, players can smell bullshit a mile off, and if you bullshit someone suddenly you’ve got: he’ll go whisper at someone else, he’ll go whisper at someone else and then suddenly you’ve got infighting, well not infighting but a tide at your gate. (Conrad, interview two)

As has been identified within the theoretical sensitivity chapter (section 3.2.3), the literature on coach education and coach development has increasingly centred its analytical lens on conceptualising the socially contested practices of sports coaching by applying Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical framework to explain coaches’ strategies of impression management and presentation of the self (Chesterfield et al., 2010; Consterdine et al., 2013;

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<sup>66</sup> At the time of the interview, Stuart Lancaster was the Head Coach of England’s men’s RU team.

Jones, 2006; Jones et al., 2002, 2003, 2011b; Mills, 2015; Partington & Cushion, 2012). Such analysis has provided the field with an increased understanding of the socially and culturally complex practices which coaches employ to negotiate and retain balances of power. Indeed, Goffman's (1959) concepts have illuminated the field's understanding of how coaches 'manage' the micro-political coaching environment to maintain positive coach-athlete relationships and gain athletes' respect (Jones, 2006; Mills, 2015; Partington & Cushion, 2012; Potrac et al., 2002). As Greg and Conrad's above statements identified, however, the coaches of the present study collectively emphasised the need to practise in a genuine and honest disposition as opposed to a 'front' and 'façade'. Billy and Sonny's sentiments respectively echoed this view:

If you put over a persona and you change the way that you are you can never keep that up. And I think yeah it may work for a small amount of time and it probably has worked for people for a small amount of the time but I think if you're going to do it for any length of time your character is going to come out at some stage. I don't think there's any point trying to be somebody you are not. I see lots of people, I see other coaches fall into that trap, and I've seen it in the past and they're never as successful. You know, for me, the most successful coaches I've worked with have always been themselves, whether they're coaching you or whether they're going for a cup of coffee with you. They are the same person and that's what I've tried to base it on. You know the best people that I've worked with and the best experiences I've had are generally with people who are themselves, so that's where I'm taking that from. (Billy, interview two)

I think you've just got to be yourself... I think just be the same while I'm coaching and when I'm not coaching you know...it's just reflecting on my personal experiences and what I think would be the best. (Sonny, interview two)

The difficulty of presenting a 'coaching front' in their practice was more problematic for the coaches who had been drawn through into coaching roles by the same clubs they continued or had previously represented as an athlete. Practicing in an alternative front to their true selves was deemed infeasible by these coaches on the basis that the athletes still practicing within the same field would be able to recognise when a new coach was not practicing in manner akin to their 'true selves'. In such a light, through the transformational process from athlete to coach, the data does not suggest that the coaches further developed

or continued to practice in a manner reprising as Bourdieu's habitus clivé or Goffman's front and back stage impression management strategies. Some of the coaches, however, did reflexively adapt their coaching philosophies but not their dispositions for man-management when supporting athletes. Conversely, some of the other coaches did not change their coaching philosophies at all and it is this theme which the following section discusses.

#### **6.4.7 Continued philosophical development (or not): Fixed or fluid**

Whilst developing their own coaching identities the coaches not only looked back on their experiences within the field of high-performance sport but also forward. Therefore, at the culmination of the second phase interviews prospective questions were asked on the theme of continued philosophical development (Turner et al., 2012 – see table 11, p.194). The answers identified two categories of the coaches having either: a 'fixed' coaching identity or a 'fluid' coaching identity. 'Fluid' coaches were open to conscious and continued reflexivity for further developing their philosophies as they considered themselves to be partway on a continual development path. For example, Kieran was one coach who had a fluid perspective on his philosophical development:

I say my philosophy is still going. They asked me this at the interview actually at (current Championship football club 2): 'what was my philosophy?' And I said it's still developing. And I said the same thing I said to you: I believe you know that the players have got to enjoy any session of mine, I want them to enjoy it because [otherwise] they won't learn; [my] philosophy is not set in stone... So like I said, philosophy is not embedded in stone but I do know my personality and I've probably got the confidence to back my knowledge up. (Kieran, interview two)

'Fluid' coaches believed they were continuously and consciously introspective in order to re-create and refine their identities (Markula, 2004). In so doing, they corresponded to Foucault's (1988b, 1997a) ethic of self care and aesthetic stylization. Conversely, other

coaches had a fixed mind-set towards their coaching and playing philosophies: “I wouldn’t change my philosophy at all” (Mark interview two). When Rory reflected back on his coaching philosophy and if it had changed since the first interview he claimed:

No I think my coaching philosophy has stayed the same. You know creating an environment I wanted the players to play in, you know, being open, honest, approachable; I think that sort of side of my coaching philosophy stayed the same.  
(Rory, interview two)

This suggests that the coaches with a fixed mind-set did not have the freedom of practice to engage in the levels of askesis for aesthetic stylization to bring self-change. Instead, it can be interpreted that these coaches were subconsciously submitting themselves to the surveillance and technologies of dominance the ‘senior pros’ course created with its entrenched discourse of reflection (Cushion, 2016). A reason why some possessed a ‘fixed’ mind-set was because a perceived need to secure their employment by attaining successful accreditation of the level three ‘senior pros’ courses to meet policy guidelines. Owen and Greg were two who signified the security and prestige the attainment of the level three coaching qualification provided them with:

I felt like because rules have changed that to be actually working within the academy you have to have the minimum of the B licence, so I felt quite a bit of pressure but once I passed there was a lot of relief there. I know that I have a good background from playing but I also know the badges will give me some recognition or some respect within obviously my peer grouping and possibly the parents of the children that I’m coaching. It is a respect thing but it is a relief that I’ve actually got them.  
(Owen, interview two)

I think people, you know, it comes down to people respect you even more because you’ve got it behind you... now I’ve got the level three behind me people stop and listen a bit more so that’s a good thing in that way. (Greg, interview two)

In Sonny’s second interview, shortly before the completion of his ‘senior pros’ award, Sonny referred to the technologies of dominance which the ‘senior pros’ courses had on him as he explained how he did not perceive himself ready for attaining a full-time coaching role until he had gained successful accreditation from the course:

So from the job wise, firstly, I haven't picked up any jobs and the reason behind that is because I didn't feel like I'm ready yet to, you know, to try to apply for a proper job, not having the level three. (Sonny, interview two)

In this sense, these views on formal coach education and accreditation corroborated with Lyle's (2002, p.275) in respect that coach education 'acts as a gatekeeper to the profession and ensures, therefore, that the competence of the practitioner can be assured'. Successful attainment of the formal coach education courses was judged by the coaches to enhance their accumulation of objectified and institutionalised cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Not only this, but the formal coaching qualifications were positively valued by many of the coaches.<sup>67</sup> Kieran was one coach who emphasised the positive view he held towards the qualification after he was asked about his experiences of it:

Good, you know I've enjoyed the qualifications. Like I said, again it's totally different now, you know, you play football all of your career and dedicate yourself to that and now you are looking at it a little bit differently and having to spend a lot of time on the qualifications. They are not easy, they don't just give you qualifications now so that's been sort of a learning curve as well but I've thoroughly enjoyed them, especially the B licence. There was a bit of pressure on that because to work in an academy you need your B licence, that's sort of the standard qualification. (Kieran, interview two)

Kieran inferred that the policy (i.e. EPPP) concerning the requirement of him attaining a minimum level of qualification for employment in a high-performance youth academy field meant that he felt a heightened level of pressure to achieve this. The same pressure and positive sentiments towards the formal qualification were held by Owen too:

I think the UEFA B (senior pros) course was a very, very helpful course. Obviously you need to be UEFA B qualified to work within the academy setup... I think obviously the qualifications do help, obviously you are learning how to teach, how to show and then obviously I think the hours that I put in observing other coaches and the hours I put in working with different age groups, different kinds of different ability levels and obviously having to adapt to their needs. I think it's been an enjoyable few months to be honest. (Owen, interview two)

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<sup>67</sup> This theme contrasts to the general position of formal NGB coaching qualifications as the literature has reported coaches to ascribe them with limited value for their development (section 3.1.2.1).



The current study's findings are therefore consistent to some extent with Nash and Sproule's (2011) results where novice coaches regarded formal coach education to be of value in contrast to experienced coaches who did not. Yet although all of the coaches are classified as novice coaches, not all of them positively reported on the 'senior pros' coaching courses. The impact that the courses had on the output of their coach development is what the final section discusses.

#### **6.4.8 Output: NGBs' regimes of truth and the effect on coach development**

The 'senior pros' courses were not the principal focus of the study. Instead, they were utilised as a site of investigation which acted as a 'bottleneck' in order to recruit participants who met the theoretical sampling criteria. The timing for conducting the interviews as close to the start and end of the courses meant that the value or lack of value the 'senior pros' courses had on the coaches' development was a theme which was enquired into within both the first and second phase interviews. The positive value of the courses has already been outlined, yet these views were not entirely consistent across the sample. What emerged from the data was how the 'espoused' course culture (Stodter & Cushion, 2014, p.69) was seen by the coaches to reprise as discursive regimes of truth<sup>68</sup>, and therefore another social layer which the coaches had to negotiate in either contesting or consenting to when forming their own coaching identities (Zehntner & McMahon, 2014). The philosophical agendas of the FA and RFU were clearly visible to the coaches in that they were reported to be overtly imparted throughout each of the course's delivery. Tim's statement highlighted how his

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<sup>68</sup> For consistency with the rest of the thesis and its findings, the term 'espoused course culture' that Stodter and Cushion (2014) presented has been replaced with Foucault's 'regimes of truth'.

course's content had been informed by the FA's new '*England DNA*' (FA, 2015) strategy:

...the FA have showed us their FA's coaching philosophy type of thing, the DNA which they are working on which I think has been in the press quite a bit, I think they've given us an insight to what road they are going down. (Tim, interview two)

Some of the RU coaches struggled to accept these regimes of truth. This then brought further tensions between the coaches and the field's structures, not only the individual clubs' regimes of truths where the coaches practiced, but also the RFU's regimes of truth. The AF coaches were not found to contest the espoused course culture, however. The interviews and data analysis identified that the AF coaches all readily consented to the FA's strategy and regimes of truth. Therefore the current study's AF coaches did not employ any impression management strategies like Chesterfield and colleagues (2010) reported when their study's AF coaches presented a 'front' for portraying agreement of course content.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, the forthcoming analysis only focusses on the data of the RU coaches as it was only these coaches who were recorded to contest this additional layer.

Interviews with the RU coaches revealed a clear course culture embedded within the course's content that pertained to promoting the use of TGfU and Game Sense pedagogical principles. Reid and Harvey (2014) have previously reported how the RFU in its level two coaching courses (the one below the 'senior pros' course – see figure six, p.77) has explicitly designed its content around the pedagogical principles of 'Game Sense'<sup>70</sup>; a pedagogical approach that NGBs such as the RFU have implemented to make a 'radical shift from traditional, skill-based, and coach-centred pedagogy to one that is player centred' and thus places a games centred approach at its heart (Reid & Harvey, 2014, p.80). Game Sense has undertones of constructivist theories of teaching and learning (Light 2013; Light & Harvey,

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<sup>69</sup> Please refer to section 3.2.3 for a more detailed overview of this study's findings.

<sup>70</sup> Game Sense has also been referred to as TGfU (see section 1.2) within the literature (Cushion, 2013; Pill, 2016; Stolz & Pill, 2016). It has also been recorded as a preferred method to coaching by the academy directors and thus formed part of their regimes of truth.

2017; Renshaw et al., 2015) and its implementation therefore shifts the coach to a facilitator (Thomas, Morgan & Mesquita, 2013) ‘where questioning is utilised to stimulate debate and reflection’ (Reid & Harvey, 2014, p.80) for athlete development. Such an approach contrasts to the coach-centred approach that is considered to disempower athletes in that the coach takes complete control (Kidman, 2005) and which is purported to dominate the coaching discourse (Zehntner & McMahon, 2013). Indeed, such an approach to coaching was recorded within iteration two as the preferred method of the RU academy directors who shaped their club culture around this. Cameron and Liam were two academy directors who emphasised this:

Yeah we do we have a culture, it’s focussed on trying to ensure that players are in a *learning environment* rather than in an overly prescriptive environment. So we have a coaching philosophy which is based a lot on trying to help the *players learn themselves* rather than ramming it down their throats. (Cameron, emphasis added, section 5.4.3)

...we are pretty big in coaching through games, Games Sense, TGfU, that type of thing... I’m a coach who wants interaction, I want the players to be questioned, I want learning to take place. So if someone is standing there for an hour shouting and screaming and giving them all of the answers and telling them to do things, I’d be questioning them why they are doing it. (Liam, section 5.4.5)

Game Sense contrasted to the traditional, coach-centred and behaviourist coaching philosophies which the coaches had been socialised to through their athletic experiences. Game Sense therefore was a way of coaching which contradicted a lot of the coaches’ taken for granted assumptions of and for coaching. Consequently, the coaches encountered hysteresis when Game Sense was first introduced as an internal conflict as to whether they accepted or rejected it occurred (McMahon, 2013; McMahon & Zehntner, 2014). At first many of the RU coaches immediately rejected this alternative and new approach toward coaching (Light & Evans, 2013). Casper was one coach out of many RU coaches who explained this notion of hysteresis within the first interview:

I just have a massive problem with the way we are being taught to coach. Now I'm not saying I'm doing it the right way, I've just developed the way I coach because of the situation I've been in and the situations I've been through. That's not necessarily right but I'm struggling to buy into the way 'they' [RFU coach educators] want me to coach. And I will coach the way 'they' want me to coach whilst 'they' are around so I get the qualification hopefully. But do I think that it's right? No... At the end of the day I will conform tomorrow with the rest of them, I'll happily put a skirt on and dance and I'll ask questions even though I think it is completely, not completely the wrong way to coach, but I want that qualification. (Casper, interview one)

Parallels with the findings of Chesterfield and colleagues' (2010) study are clearly evoked from Casper's experiences. Yet although Chesterfield and colleagues (2010) insightfully showed the strategies AF coaches employed to attain successful accreditation, they did not explain how the coaches under analysis had formed their coaching philosophies from their lived experiences as either coaches or athletes. Thus, Chesterfield and colleagues (2010) failed to provide a reason as to exactly *why* the coaches rejected the course's regime of truth.

The findings of the current iteration, in addition to the project's first two iterations, can illuminate why the RFU's 'senior pros' course's regime of truth was initially rejected based on the upheld docility towards each club's own regimes of truth. As Casper remarked in his second interview, when he reflected back on the value of implementing a Game Sense approach in his coaching sessions over the past year, the semi-professional field's norms he had practiced meant that this coaching philosophy was rejected by his players as well: "So I'll be honest, the players, my players from my experience don't enjoy that ask, ask, ask [of questioning]" (Casper, interview two). Conrad provided his reasons as to why a constructivist approach was not effective within the same delimited field of semi-professional RU:

I just felt that the way they were talking in the level three was just too much about everything has to be through questions, which I think if you're in New Zealand and you've got people that are brought up on rugby, who've played rugby since they were three and four years old, great. But it wouldn't be unusual for some of these guys (semi-professional athletes) to have only been playing rugby for five or six years so they haven't got that knowledge, that background, they haven't got that

upbringing to do it, to play. And that's possibly where I think the New Zealand influence is having the question, question, question; which I think is good at times but I think over here people sometimes also need to be told. (Conrad, interview two)

As Conrad and Casper's above sentiments infer, the RU coaches also appeared to reject the course's regimes of truth because the coaching method it was advocating was not considered applicable to the culture of English RU, as both players and coaches were not familiar with such a pedagogical approach. The practical 'realities' of RU's high-performance field was another reason why such coaching approaches were initially rejected. Game Sense coaching requires the utilisation of questions, meaning that this method was also seen to take longer to employ pragmatically on the training ground. Hence, as a position specific coach at an English Premiership RU club, Billy remarked how a Game Sense philosophy was considered by him to be 'unrealistic' and an 'idealised' vision of coaching:

I think the problem with the level three is, is that's an ideal world but realistically when you're coaching it's not an ideal world. I mean the level three were coaching you to be open with the players, questioning with the players but in the real world you haven't really got time to do all of that questioning, you've got such a short turnaround in such a short space of time to get things done and move on you know. If you're trying to do questioning and you don't get the answers you want you end up telling more. So I think some of the stuff we do on the level three and the RFU level four are always made for the perfect world scenarios but unfortunately a lot of the time we are not living in the perfect world. (Billy, interview one)

The regime of truth for the RFU's 'senior pros' course was an important contextual backdrop which influenced the RU coaches' development. The data inferred a contradictory approach to how the RFU delivered the 'senior pros' course content: although the RFU espoused the coaches to promote constructivist ideals in their coaching practices, the data taken from interviews with the RU coaches suggested that the RFU's own teaching delivery resembled behaviourist attitudes where the course educators delivered content in a reductive manner. Such an approach has commonly been reported by research as one which coaches have not valued (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Cassidy et al., 2006; Côté, 2006; Mallett et al.,

2009; Mesquita et al., 2014; Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Nelson et al., 2006; Piggott, 2012, 2015; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2015; *inter-alia* – section 3.1.2). Moreover, the RFU's own teaching strategy meant that the coaches encountered hysteresis when first introduced and encouraged to adopt a constructivist coaching philosophy (McMahon & Zehntner, 2014). Therefore, this finding may require the RFU 'senior pros' course educators in the present setting to reconsider how they deliver the course content themselves in order to avoid the coaches immediately contesting the approach (Cassidy et al., 2006).

Yet the study design of collecting data at multiple points of time revealed how deep reflexive processes on this aspect had been undertaken by the RU coaches by the time the second interviews were conducted. Ultimately, this meant that an appreciation of the course content was reached by the coaches and that the RFU's 'senior pros' course was valued overall. Casper and Conrad were two participants who stated in the first phase interview that they immediately contested the RFU's regimes of truth. By the second interviews they both claimed that they had reflected on their experiences and saw the benefit this process had brought them for their coach development:

I look back at that and reflected and thought to myself well actually I'm asking the wrong questions, maybe I'm not doing it right... I'm not fighting against it, I'm questioning it undoubtedly but at the same time it's helping me and its opening my eyes so in that regard it's been a worthwhile experience. Whether I get the qualification or not, it is good to do... Yeah, but it has been and is a worthwhile experience, so as much as I bitch, moan and sap it is good. I've sort of back tracked completely now. (Casper, interview two)

Do you know what the sort of the nice thing was, I could build into it. I could. I wasn't frightened. If I'd been offered this job [position specific coach at Premiership RU club] last year I think I would have been absolutely scared shitless; that so much work was needed. But I think the last year, even though the last year was pretty 'bitty' it's actually given me the confidence to know that I'm capable of it and actually the coaching side of it doesn't scare me at all... (Conrad, interview two)

In short, the project has thus far considered the dyadic relationship between the coaches and their clubs. The iteration's results however depict that this relationship needs to be extended into a triadic one at least; one that considers the intersubjective relationship of

how coaches interpret and balance their own aspirations of coaching in conjunction with the regimes of truth governed by their clubs and their respective NGB's coach education courses. Therefore, the present iteration's results have illuminated how elite athletes who are 'fast-tracked' through the high-performance coach pathway negotiate the structural regimes of truth, but also why certain attitudes towards developing their coaching philosophies and identities were conformed to or contested. After concluding the iteration's findings, the following section analyses the value of both Bourdieu and Foucault's theoretical frameworks in line with all of the project's previous data of each iteration. In turn, this leads onto the project's final chapter that outlines the developed GT and the contribution the thesis makes to the field of coach learning and development.

## **6.5 Iteration 3 conclusion**

The iteration sought to identify the developmental pathways and social processes for how and why 'fast-tracked' coaches transitioned into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles. By doing so, 'aspirational' and 'accidental' coach pathways were identified. Both categories of coach undertook a clear transition whereby they began to consolidate their coach identities from their athletic identities. Here, the interaction between the coaches as social agents and the social structures (clubs and NGBs) was shown to be highly contested for some which made the consolidation of their coaching identities somewhat problematic. In such cases, this meant their lack of job security detrimentally impacted their transitions into a post-athletic coaching career by the time the second interviews were conducted.

This finding highlights how the career pathway from elite athlete to high-performance coach within the fields of AF and RU is more problematic than what the coaching literature has reported hitherto (cf. Bloom et al., 1998; Erickson et al., 2007; Schinke et al., 1995; Werthner & Trudel, 2009 – section 3.1.1). Identifying both

‘aspirational’ and ‘accidental’ types of coaches also provides an original insight into elite athletes’ coaching pathways. With ‘significant others’ instigating the access routes into coaching the results demonstrate how coach development and education is accountable to ‘local discursivities and subjected knowledge’ (Cushion, 2016, p.2; Foucault, 1980).

Designing the iteration to collect data at two points of time provided a greater level of insight into these ‘local discursivities’ that influence the coaches’ transitions into coaching. The first phase interviews identified that an elite competitive-athletic career subjected the coaches to their club’s regimes of truth and discourses towards coaching and playing philosophies. Indeed, as each club acted as a delimited field, their individual cultures had considerable influence on what coaching knowledge and values were acquired at the formative stages of the coaches’ development. For instance, the coaches found it difficult to articulate their coaching philosophies (Nash et al., 2008) and exactly how they had been acquired, other than from playing under previous coaches. That is to say the coaches were docile bodies to the club’s values and beliefs by ‘folding’ the external club values onto their own internal selves at the intersection of the subconscious and conscious level.

The second phase interviews identified the juncture whereby the coaches recognised their own subjectivity by becoming cognisant of their club’s subcultural values and beliefs. For example, the coaches were unaware of how their clubs enacted normalising processes onto them during their athletic careers and then their initial phases into coaching. It was not until the ‘senior pros’ coaching courses that the coaches became reflexive and cognisant of these normalising processes. At this point some of the coaches exercised their own agency by attempting to negotiate their own coaching identity against the expectations of the clubs in a manner aligned to Foucault’s (1988b, 1997a) ethic of self care. Alternatively, other coaches acted as docile bodies by consenting to their club’s regimes of truth.

Underpinning the coaches’ actions was the desire to either create or maintain athlete to coach respect by practicing in a coaching mode which reflected their true and honest



selves. Foucault's technology of self captures this process. Indeed, technologies of the self has been interpreted here to be a more accurate conceptualisation of the data than Bourdieu's habitus clivé; as habitus clivé means the initial habitus remains whilst an alternative one is presented (Bourdieu, 2000). Technologies of the self, on the other hand, depict the disciplinary processes the coaches undertook when conforming to or contesting the pressures and expectations of AF and RU's field.

It is worthwhile noting here that there was no reported difference between the 'aspirational' and 'accidental' coaches for when they reached a deeper level of self-reflexivity. For these substantive populations, this finding provides a caveat to the oft-cited claims that 'coaches learn by doing' (Erickson et al., 2008; Mesquita et al., 2014 – section 6.1.1). Although the 'aspirational' coaches may have become more practised and thus confident in coaching concerning organisational and man-management techniques, the amount they consciously reflected upon their coaching skill sets and their coaching philosophies was negligible in comparison with the 'accidental coaches' (Nash et al., 2008; Nash & Sproule, 2009). This suggests that it may be beneficial for NGB's to provide additional mentoring opportunities to 'aspirational' coaches during their formative coaching experiences to help stimulate greater levels of reflexivity. Doing so may enable such coaches to become more aware of the discursive regimes of truth each field subjects them to.

The data suggests that caution needs to be concerning the manner in which NGBs manage the mentor-mentee relationship with prospective coaches. The coaches preferred to utilise informal mentors in comparison to formal mentors assigned to them by the 'senior pros' coaching courses because of a perceived lack of trust. This was primarily founded upon the coaches perceiving informal mentors to have shared coaching and playing philosophies through practice within the same delimited field of each club environment as opposed to the formal mentors who were not part of these semi-autonomous fields. Subsequently, for NGBs to make greater inroads with their own mentoring practices, the suggestion to extend the

mentoring relationship from a dyad (coach and formal mentor) to a network, which at least includes the coach, formal mentor and informal mentor, may enable the coaches to achieve greater levels of self-reflexivity sooner into their coach transitions. Doing so may also avoid the recorded levels of hysteresis. Further exposure or practice in other fields - whether this being other delimited fields of clubs within the same sports or alternative sporting fields – may also help the coaches become more reflexive on their club's regimes of truth and normalising practices in developing their own coaching and playing philosophies. Again these experiences will benefit from formal mentorship in order to avoid heightened levels of hysteresis but to also stimulate the necessary levels of reflexivity for sufficient, innovative development to occur whereby existing coaching practices are not simply reproduced without being first questioned and interrogated.

Finally, the theme of clubs drawing their own athletes through into coaching roles corroborates with the findings of iterations one and two. This finding has also led onto signifying the inapplicability of Goffman's impression management strategies. The importance the coaches placed on 'honesty' and being 'true to their selves' in order to achieve the necessary levels of athlete to coach respect means that Goffman's front and back stage impression management strategies were not evident. With the coaches having prior affiliations with their clubs and the individuals within these clubs (athletes, coaches and directors), an alternative coaching disposition which did not match their athletic disposition could not be presented as the important element of athlete to coach respect would not be attained. Foucault's recognition of agents operating simultaneously on the 'inside' and 'outside' terrains provides a clear conceptualisation of the self-reflexive processes for the career transition from athlete to coach and how the coaches negotiated and then consolidated their coach identities to a greater capacity than Bourdieu. The discussion therefore now turns to appraising Foucault's work against Bourdieu's in line with the iteration's findings in order to present a final GT.

## Chapter 7 - Theoretical memo (3/3)

Foucault's work has been criticised as 'monolithic determinism' (Strozier, 2002, p.57) because he is seen to focus on how social agents are foregrounded as 'discursive subjects' submitted to en-culturing processes by organisations that are rooted in historical relations of power and which ultimately produce a cultural subject (Minson, 1986). The third iteration's data showed that when the coaches first undertook their access routes into coaching (through their first introductory or formalised coaching roles), then such a criticism can be considered applicable. This is because the coaches were not cognisant of their subjectivation of the field's regimes of truth via the surveillance strategies and technologies of domination recorded within the first two iterations. Nevertheless, the coaches later recognised this subjection through their enrolment on the 'senior pros' courses, initiating techniques of the self by becoming self-reflexive in either contesting the field's regimes of truth or consenting to them.

Such actions align to Foucault's technologies of the self by recognising the agential capabilities each coach upheld whilst recognising how the coaches themselves were able to consciously act and fold the outside terrain onto their own subjective inside terrains for consolidating their coaching identities (Deleuze, 1999/1986; Markula, 2003). Yet Foucault's concepts of technologies of power, production, subjectivation, surveillance, and regimes of truth conceptualise the social processes of the outside terrain in respect of how each club attempted to normalise their values and coaching discourses (i.e. coaching and playing philosophies). The interplay between the outside and inside terrains is regarded as 'the double' and 'creates an ongoing process of 'subjectivation' in which knowledge of power located in the outside terrain and techniques of the self located on the inside terrain are closely intertwined' (Evans et al., 2016, p.4). Therefore, as mentioned within the previous

theoretical memo (section 5.6), this ongoing process and interplay between the two terrains creates emancipatory and productive capabilities as power was theorised by Foucault (1997a) to not solely manifest in a reductive or deterministic capacity.

A re-reading of the data suggested that the ongoing process of folding ‘the double’ (with power being both restrictive and productive), is an important theme for the creation of coaching identities when elite athletes transition into post-athletic coaching roles. Firstly, within iteration two, although the academy directors expressed their intentions were to discursively shape coach learning, they did afford the possibility of the coaches to extend and further develop their coaching philosophies and practices: therefore power was restrictive but also had the potential to be productive. Gareth and Dexter’s respective statements from iteration two inferred to this:

I’d like to feel we create a culture, we create an unwritten approach to how we do things that rubs off on people and get them to hopefully support and agree with our approach and want to buy into our culture, *and extend it and grow within it.* (Gareth, emphasis added)

So what we have is people with their own philosophy but we built one here and what we want is people to come in and fit in. And we want people who, now we’re not talking about they have to come in and be bland, they have to come in and evolve it. If they can come in and evolve it for us, fine, but if they can’t then we want them to stick to the plan. (Dexter)

Secondly, in iteration three, the coaches found to have a fluid coaching philosophy also indicates the significance of the doubling of the two terrains. Fluid coaches were open to changing their philosophies through care of the self and aesthetic stylization (Foucault, 1988b; Markula, 2004) as a result of accumulating more direct coaching experiences and by reacting to structural constraints imposed upon them (Infinito, 2003). These cases show how these coaches had the capacity to be reflexive by employing technologies of the self in transforming their identities: they possessed the ability to ‘question what is seemingly ‘natural’, and to begin to create an identity of one’s own’ (Evans et al., 2016, p.4-5). This further adds to the critique of Bourdieu’s deterministic unconscious habitus formation

(Noble & Watkins, 2003 - section 6.1.2), as although the coaches' core beliefs were considered to stay the same, their coaching and playing philosophies could be developed and refined, even when their coaching philosophies were seen to mirror their core beliefs: "I think for me again your coaching philosophy is around your sort of core values that sort of stick with you, it's who you are as a person really, your beliefs" (Tim, interview two, section 6.4.4 [p.222]).

Foucault's affordance of placing greater agency capabilities for reflexively negotiating their own identity construction by looking back and projecting future intentions whilst mediating this against the social structures they are socially and historically situated within, not only enables us to understand the 'fast-track' transition of elite athlete to high-performance coach, but also conceptualises the social processes to explain why such a phenomenon is socially reproduced.

## 7.1 Methodological memo (3/3)

I did not encounter the same difficulties of participant recruitment within this iteration compared to the previous two iterations. Engagement with external organisations such as the PFA and RFU helped significantly break down barriers for accessing the theoretically identified samples. As detailed in section 6.2.2, these two organisations were extremely helpful by providing me direct access to address their new intake of cohorts on their ‘fast-track’ senior-pros coaching qualifications. This was not a privilege I had with the previous iterations’ samples and I believe it significantly helped dispel any apprehensions potential participants may have had towards their involvement in the study.

To recruit participants the RFU allowed me to attend their senior pros course and for a brief time after the introductory session I was able to further engage prospective participants informally in the morning break. This enabled me to further reassure prospective participants on their concerns whilst I further explained the study’s objectives. Many prospective RU participants mentioned that they did not consider themselves educated or well-informed enough on coaching to positively participate. This made me reflect on my own positionality once again as I believe that after having explained that the study was part of my PhD, this may have been a point which deterred many prospective participants. When liaising with these RU participants I was able to reassure many that I too had been a coach and that I was primarily interested to hear how their career transition into coaching had been thus far. Subsequently, having the opportunity to informally speak about these concerns enabled me to get a sufficient sample number of 10 RU coaches.

I was not afforded the same opportunity with the AF participants. I believe this to have been a significant factor for the lack of AF participants. For future research in this area, I believe that taking additional time with external organisations to discuss the importance of being able to informally engage with and address potential questions or concerns before

initiating participant recruitment procedures is vitally important.

In addition to working with the PFA, I did attempt to make contact with the FA in order to help with participant recruitment as I was aware that they also held senior pros coaching courses. After I attempted to make direct contact with relevant personnel and after using my own personal and academic networks of associates who knew potentially helpful representatives I was unsuccessful with this endeavour. I interpret my lack of success to my own lack of capital and that I have not previously been a part of any research projects with the FA beforehand. The personal correspondence I received from the FA stated that it and its representatives were unable to assist me on the basis that existing research arrangements with other universities and academics were in place and there was a concern that their course's candidates who had a high-profile in the field of elite AF would not appreciate any approach of mine.

I also attempted to directly engage with prospective AF participants who were enrolled onto the senior pros course after having their contact details passed to me through mutual associates. Again, this strategy yielded no results. This was a surprise to me as I thought I would be able to better engage AF coaches in person due to my background having been primarily within AF. Although I never directly explained that I had specifically been an AF coach and player (I just stated that I had been a coach and was interested in coaching), I believe that any prospective participant would have been able to deduce that I did not have much experience within RU. This was because I am only five foot five inches tall meaning that I do not possess the usual body stature of a RU athlete. Indeed, upon reflection, this is an area which would be of interest for further scrutiny, to identify if other researchers, in and out of sport, have also encountered difficulties with participant recruitment because of their positionality as academics, researchers and their perceived backgrounds. Ultimately, I believe that further engagement with the relevant organisation (PFA in this instance) to arrange the opportunity to informally speak to prospective research participants is necessary

in order to grow the sample base. In addition to participant recruitment difficulties, I also encountered some unexpected difficulties when conducting the interviews. The below section describes these.

After having become a lot more confident and more proficient in the manner in which I perceived to conduct my interviews, it was a surprise to me that I initially struggled with obtaining rich data within the first few interviews during the first phase of data collection. Although I had sensitising concepts which informed the nature of my questions (see table 10, p.192), the semi-structured nature of these first interviews meant the participants found it difficult to comprehend the broad nature of my questions. These interviews were very short in length, with the shortest being 22 minutes as the answers within these interviews were somewhat terse. By analysing these data, the main reason why these answers were as short as they were was because these participants were later categorised as ‘reluctant’ coaches, and as such were not fully aware of how their coaching knowledge or pathways had developed. Compounding this was the timing of when the interviews were conducted. With these reluctant coaches not having undertaken much formalised coaching roles or experiences, and who were not consciously aware of the knowledge they had acquired from their competitive-athletic careers, interviewing them at the beginning of their formal coaching qualifications meant they had not explicitly reflected on their experiences. Therefore, these experiences had not been contextualised into learning or knowledge and thus their responses were either vague or short.

I did not encounter the same issues during the second phase interviews, however, because all of the participants were able to reflect on their pathways and coaching experiences to a greater degree. Prior experiences and career phases which I had previously asked upon within the first phase interviews had been reflected upon during the intervening period. Indeed, such a finding further enforces the tacit and subconsciously acquired knowledge from their competitive-athletic careers to have only been reflected upon during



the intervening period whilst they were enrolled on their formalised coaching course. In this light, this further reiterates the value of these formalised courses for such a population.

This was evidenced when one participant stated off record that the first phase interviews had made him consciously aware of how little he thought he knew about coaching and how it made him work harder to accumulate more knowledge in order to succeed in passing his senior pros qualification. This same participant said that he found the process of transcript member checking to be a revealing insight into how he was, in his view, unable to articulate himself. It was the first time that he had read verbatim passages of his speech. His perceived inability to articulate himself concerned him as he judged that to have a successful coaching career he needed to be able to verbally communicate to his players clearly. As such, because he saw this as a weakness he sought extra advice from his formalised mentor and attended an additional communication course.

This represents the unintentional influence and affect which I and other qualitative researchers can have on our participants' life-worlds. It was quite a shock to me when the participant disclosed this information to me at the end of the second phase interview. Although I had explicitly requested each participant not be too concerned with the grammar of their speech during the transcript member checking process, this one individual ignored this request. In so doing, he became very concerned and implemented an action plan to improve this skill. This could have had an adverse impact on the participant's career aspirations. Hence, this led me to reflect on the process of transcript member checking. These reflections are further considered whilst recognising the thesis' forthcoming limitations section (section 8.2).

## **Chapter 8 - Summary and conclusion: A grounded theory**

To understand the social processes for the ‘fast-track’ transition between elite athlete and high-performance coach in men’s association football and rugby union

The imposed boundaries of the thesis were to analyse the phenomena within the two substantive populations of men’s AF and RU within England. This meant the intention at the start of the thesis was never to formulate a formal GT for the above research statement. On this basis, the aim was to construct a substantive GT which depicts the phenomena’s differences for each of the populations and then formulate a middle-range GT which represents the actions and processes for both populations (see figure two, section 2.2, p.19). After conducting all of the empirical iterations, however, there have only been two discernible differences recorded between the two populations. These differences were found within iteration three and were: a) four out of the five AF coaches occupied only one coaching role during the intervening period between the first and second interviews. These were largely within the field of youth academies. This pathway was in direct contrast to the RU coaches pathways as six out of the 15 RU coaches fulfilled multiple coaching roles in a range of fields other than just youth academies (see figure 12 [p.235]); and b) RU coaches initially rejected their respective NGB’s ‘senior pros’ course ‘espoused course culture’ in contrast to their AF counterparts (section 6.4.8). Although the recommendations for the RFU have already been provided on how their coach educators could attend to these points (section 6.4.8), it is important to reiterate the significance of this finding for the benefit of those stakeholders educating and developing former elite-athletes as high-performance coaches within these two substantive fields.

It was recorded that RU coaches felt that they had to accumulate additional coaching roles in order to continue to earn a satisfactory living wage. This was because the coaching roles that they fulfilled in the youth performance academies were either voluntary or had

limited available paid hours attached to them. This was unlike the AF coaches who were all drawn through into paid youth academy roles with sufficient paid hours (see section 6.4.1). As a consequence of this, the RU coaches occupied multiple roles in a number of fields (figure 12, p.235). Although additional direct coaching experience has been largely considered by the coach education and development literature to be of value (Gilbert & Trudel, 2002), in this instance it can be regarded as having had a negative effect on the sampled RU coaches' development. In this instance, these additional coaching experiences can be regarded as a contributory factor as to why the RU coaches initially resisted the 'espoused course culture' which the RFU senior pros course advocated. In turn, this brought heightened levels of hysteresis for the RU coaches as opposed to the AF coaches who did not encounter hysteresis to the same extent.

With the exception of the two aforementioned findings, the project's remaining findings are applicable across the AF and RU fields. The forthcoming content included within this chapter does not present a substantive GT. Instead, this chapter presents the middle-range GT which conceptually explains the 'fast-track' transition of both male AF and RU athletes into post-athletic high-performance coaching roles.

To conceptualise the recorded social processes for the phenomenon, both Bourdieu and Foucault's conceptual framework have been found to have applicability as they were ground within the thesis' data. Although the two theoretical standpoints conceptualise power differently, they nevertheless converge to a degree as they both attest to uncovering the invisible relations of power and the dominating effect it has on agency (Lukes, 2005). Moreover, when initially proposing middle-range theories, Merton (1968, p.43, original emphasis) described how

...comprehensive sociological theories are sufficiently loose-knit, internally diversified, and mutually overlapping that a *given theory of the middle range*, which has a measure of empirical confirmation, can often be subsumed under comprehensive theories which are themselves discrepant in certain areas.

Therefore, when presenting the thesis' GT, it includes Bourdieusian and Foucauldian concepts to theoretically explain the career transition the coaches have been found to undertake. After the thesis' GT is presented, the limitations of the thesis are then acknowledged. The chapter then details how the emerging middle-range GT can inform policy in the area of coach development and education for the substantive populations as well as policy that affects coach recruitment within the field of high-performance sport. Lastly, future directions of enquiry to develop a formal GT for the phenomena are proposed. In reaching this point the following section is structured in a manner which ensures the middle-range GT meets the four criteria of: fit, work, relevance and modifiability (Weed, 2009). The definitions of these criteria were initially presented in figure three (p.28) and in section 2.7.6 (p.38) but are also reprinted below in table 15 for clarity.

**Table 15 Definition of final GT criteria (adapted from Weed, 2009)**

| <b>Final GT criteria</b> | <b>Definition</b>   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Fit                      | Denotes the success for how closely the theory explains the phenomena under investigation. Adherence to the constant comparison method ensures a theory 'fits'. |
| Work                     | Judgement on whether a theory 'works' is made if it offers 'analytical explanations for the processes and problems in the context it seeks to refer'.           |
| Relevance                | Relevance is intended to signify that any theory developed is directly relatable to the concerns and realities of those the phenomena effects.                  |
| Modifiability            | Modifiability means that theories are fallible and have the capacity to be extended by later research   |

## 8.1 Middle-range theory

The thesis has shown coach learning and development to be ensconced within cultural fields. It thereby supports the position that coach development and learning can be understood culturally (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2016; Christensen, 2013; Cushion & Jones, 2001; Mallett et al., 2016; Nelson et al., 2016; *inter-alia*). Yet the thesis originally extends our understanding of coach learning and development as a cultural event by signifying the boundaries to these cultural fields to be defined by the individual sports and most significantly the individual clubs. Consequently, unlike extant literature which has previously labelled these environments as ‘contexts’, the thesis has conceptualised these cultural learning environments as semi-autonomous delimited fields (see figure seven [p.112], sections 4.4 & 5.1.1). In such a light, the thesis has identified how such cultural values and beliefs reprise as sporting and club identities, which for these substantive populations manifest themselves most notably as coaching and playing philosophies. Such philosophies have been shown to arise from deeply set socio-cultural values and relations of power, and have thus been conceptualised as regimes of truth.

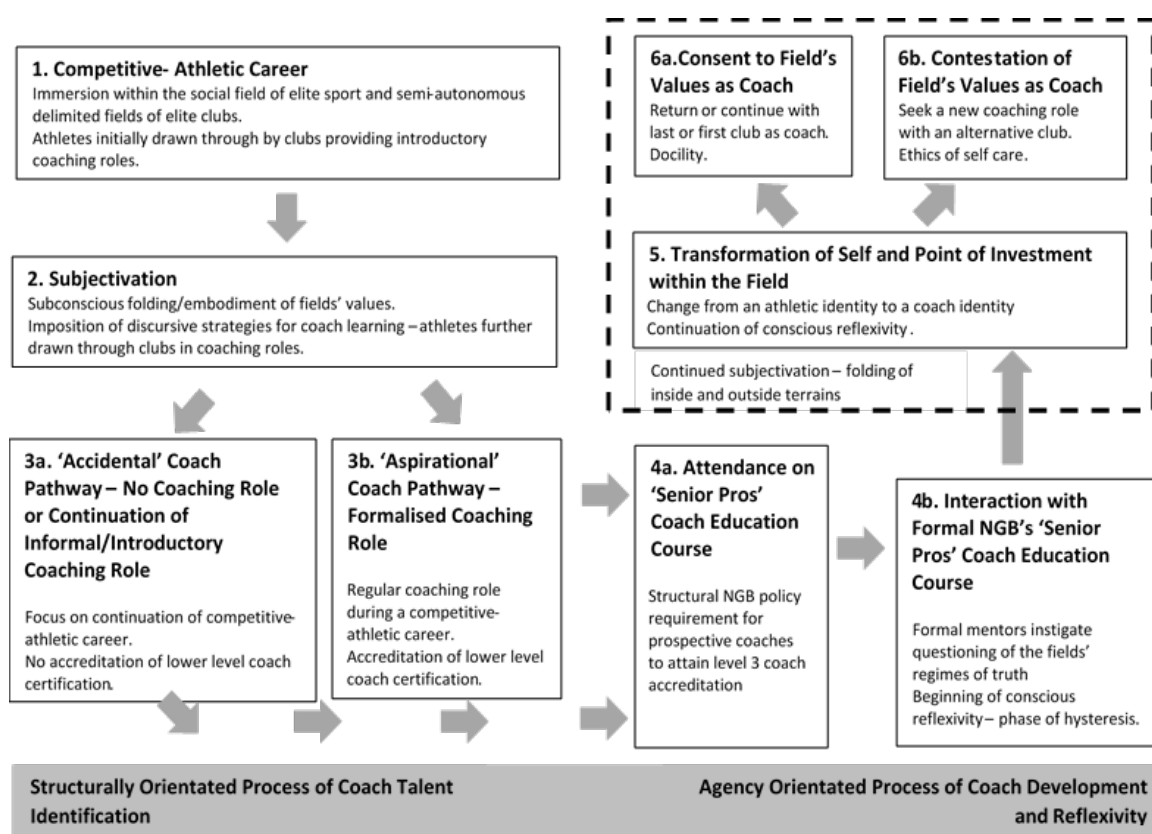
This is an important finding the thesis has identified. Existing literature has reported the importance of coaches developing and refining their individual coaching philosophies (Bennie & O’Connor, 2010) but the same emphasis has not been made concerning playing philosophies. Indeed, Cushion and Partington (2016) noted how the term ‘coaching philosophy’ has been misinterpreted within the academic literature on coaching and that in some cases a playing philosophy has often been conflated and subsumed by the term ‘coaching philosophy’. In the cases where studies did define their interpretation of what ‘coaching philosophy’ represents, many described it to be a coach’s ‘approach to coaching underpinned by personal qualities and skills’ (*ibid*, p.855). The authors continue to discuss that individual coach’s philosophies are culturally legitimised as a product of the field’s

discourse and therefore present the claim that a ‘coaching philosophy’ can actually be considered as a ‘coaching ideology’. The present thesis therefore strengthens this claim after highlighting the importance of club culture and the influence this has on individual coach development and their perceived ‘coaching philosophies’. With the thesis having drawn on Foucauldian concepts, instead of labelling a ‘coaching philosophy’ as a ‘coaching ideology’, it can instead be regarded as a ‘regime of truth’ (see sections 6.4.5 and 6.4.8) based on the aforementioned criticisms of ideology (see section 3.2.2).

The value for developing a ‘coaching philosophy’ and how this is developed has been a significant area of analysis for the thesis. Its findings on this point originally contribute to understanding the processes of high-performance coach development and pathways for the substantive fields. It is considered that such a finding and the social processes that underpin the continued legitimisation of particular coaching beliefs, attitudes and practices can inform the broader field of coach development.

Within the fields of elite men’s AF and RU, the thesis has recorded senior and academy directors to discursively impart these philosophies onto athletes in preparation for drawing them through their clubs into coaching roles. The thesis therefore further supports the notion that coach socialisation begins during a coach’s previous playing career (Cushion et al., 2003; Lemyre et al., 2007; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). In so doing, the thesis also sheds new light on the social processes consumed within this socialisation process in regards to the value placed by high-performance directors on agency subjectivation of ‘club’ values. These values and beliefs are otherwise referred to as ‘philosophies’ within the discourse of men’s high-performance AF and RU fields. Importantly, these ‘philosophies’ were not considered by the senior directors to be acquired within formal coach accreditation courses but more so through socialisation within the club during a competitive-athletic career. This view predisposed the directors to devalue formal NGB coach education and explained why they preferred to draw ‘their club’s’ athletes through into post-athletic high-performance

coaching roles (sections 4.3.3 and 5.4.2). It is here whereby the thesis has also contributed to original knowledge by conceptualising the social processes for how these ‘philosophies’ reprised as regimes of truth and how they were discursively imparted to shape coach learning. The process of how these ‘philosophies’ were discursively imparted onto athletes and the initial sub-conscious acquisition of them is presented in the thesis’ GT model below (figure 13).<sup>71</sup>



**Figure 13 Middle-range GT for the ‘fast-track’ transition of elite athlete to high-performance coach in men’s AF and RU**

In the first phase of the model, the developed GT shows coach socialisation to occur

<sup>71</sup> Although I have reported on how ‘staged’ models for coaches’ pathways have been criticised for presenting ‘linear’, ‘one-dimensional’ and a-theoretical depictions of the pathway (Christensen, 2013, p.99-100, see section 3.1.2), in presenting this model I only intend it to be for the substantive populations I have analysed. In an attempt to overcome the criticism of the model being ‘linear’, the multiple routes found to be embedded within the pathway have been included. The theoretical concepts which have been grounded within the thesis’ data that underpin each phase have also been used as a theoretical base.

during an athlete's competitive tenure. Subjective coach talent identification processes are enacted by the senior and academy directors throughout this phase. Any athlete who showed prospective coaching capabilities through their embodiment or subjectivation of these 'philosophies' (or regimes of truth) was then looked upon favourably for a future coaching role within the club (section 4.3.4). The third iteration identified that the embodiment and subjectivation of these 'philosophies' was indeed conducted subconsciously (section 6.4.4). The social process of 'drawing athletes through' into introductory coaching roles during their competitive-athletic careers was intended to further socialise the athletes to their delimited field's 'philosophies'. Here, power is therefore interpreted to be an element which agents can possess through the acquisition and embodiment of Bourdieu's (1986) species of capital.

During an elite athlete's competitive career, the senior directors' subjective assessments of coach talent identification orientated upon an athlete's prospective ability as a coach to attain athlete respect (sections 4.3.2 – 4.3.3). Deeming the required levels of respect to be engendered from embodied and objectified cultural capital, the directors considered athletes to convert this into symbolic capital when transferring into a post-athletic coaching role. This conversion was judged to entail athlete to coach respect to then be attained. These subjective forms of coach talent identification were based on the directors' own practical sense, evoked from their own socialisation within the field of elite sport and the semi-autonomous field of 'their' respective clubs as athletes, coaches and role as a director. It was on this basis that the senior directors were conceptualised as 'cultural custodians' as they were able to define the role of a head coach and even to some extent the coaching practices employed at 'their' club (sections 4.3.1 & 4.3.4).

To furthermore facilitate this process of coach talent identification, introductory coaching roles were 'offered' to the club's elite athletes within their club's community department and academy (sections 6.4.1-2, figure 11, p.204). It is during this time that the club employed hierarchical and lateral surveillance strategies to discursively shape coach



learning. Such a finding contrasts to those reported by extant literature which has analysed high-performance coach development. In particular, Sherwin and colleagues (2017, p.277) have recently concluded that ‘continuous professional development of coaches in Ireland appears to come solely from self-directed learning and practical coaching experience’.

After moving away from coach-centric samples which the existing coach development literature had prioritised, the current thesis’ has identified how senior and academy directors enacted techniques to subconsciously objectify athletes into becoming docile subjects. This has enabled the thesis to provide a theoretical advancement for understanding coach development within these fields as it has highlighted the discursive and subjective processes of coach talent identification employed by directors (section 5.4.2). Unlike athlete talent identification (Abbott & Collins, 2002; Christensen, 2009; Houlihan & Chapman, 2017; Williams & Reilly, 2000; *inter-alia*), coach talent identification is an area which hitherto has not been empirically analysed. Its clear implementation within these substantive fields, however, suggests that this is a topic which requires further investigation to clarify whether this is a social process which occurs in other fields of high-performance sport. Indeed, the theoretical conceptualisation the thesis has presented for how coach talent identification is implemented presents the case that symbolic violence is imposed onto populations who do not have the capacity to accumulate field specific embodied knowledge through their socialisation to the field via their careers as elite male athletes. The implications on policy for high-performance coach recruitment on these practices of symbolic violence are forthcoming (section 8.3).

The second iteration identified the theoretical juncture between Bourdieu and Foucault in regards to how the academy directors discursively shaped coach learning (section 5.4.5). A critique of Bourdieu’s pedagogic action (section 5.6) signified that this concept and his conceptualisation of agency habitus could not explain the academy directors’ actions for how they governed a culture to strategically contour coach learning. Therefore,

the data inferred to Bourdieu's conceptualisation to take a determinist and reductionist position that has a lack of clarity to how the field's dominant philosophies are governed (sections 4.4 & 6.4.4). Conversely, for this component of the thesis, Foucault's concepts were more accurately grounded within the data by suggesting academy directors acted as reflexive bodies when implementing hierarchical and lateral technologies of power to sustain and reproduce their club's dominant philosophies (sections 5.4.5.1 – 5.4.5.2).

The thesis has then progressed from analysing the structural processes behind the phenomena to analysing the lived experiences, realities and actions of current or former elite athletes who were negotiating the career transition. The third iteration's theoretical sample was completed after an appraisal of extant literature's methods and study designs. It resulted in the identification of cohorts from both AF and RU who were currently undertaking their respective NGB's 'senior pros' formal coach accreditation as a pertinent and original sample to address the thesis' overarching research statement (sections 6.1 – 6.1.2). In so doing, the thesis has provided a methodological advancement into how the agential lived experiences of those individuals who negotiate this substantive career transition can be captured. By collecting data at two points of time over a 10 to 12 month period, and thus integrating temporality into the study design, it has shown how coach development from an agential perspective is just as culturally contested when compared to the findings engendered from iterations one and two. Indeed, such a methodological advancement can be proposed for research that analyses coach development in other fields.

The third iteration has identified that during individuals' competitive-athletic careers, or when they had only just transitioned into a post-athletic coaching role, the coaches were unaware of the aforementioned subjective forms of coach talent identification enacted onto them by the directors (section 6.4.1). This finding in itself also extends our understanding of coach development and coach socialisation during competitive-athletic careers. The literature on coach development and learning has previously reported how athletes can of

their own accord acquire coaching knowledge as a by-product from their athletic career which serves as a form of experience or apprenticeship of coaching to internalise coaching practices (Cushion et al., 2003; Jones et al., 2003 – see section 3.1.2). In light of the thesis' findings, amendment of this statement needs to be made to one which removes the emphasis of athletes and future coaches depicted as autonomous entities who operate and acquire knowledge in a benign uncontested field. Instead, it can be proposed within the fields of elite men's AF and RU that athletes are subjected bodies who acquire subjugated knowledge from highly contested cultural fields (Cushion & Jones, 2014; Denison et al., 2015). This assertion then leads on to questioning the value of applying the concept of informal/unmediated learning which is judged to occur from coaches' everyday experiences (cf. Nash & Collins, 2006 – see section 3.1.2.2). Since academy directors produced and reproduced a culture within their clubs to create their own distinct identity, as defined and governed by them (section 5.4.1), the promotion of their own internal CPD practices was conceptualised as a discursive technology of power. Such a culture was hierarchically and laterally diffused across the academy space on a daily basis. Enacting such discursive technologies of power into the everyday cultural environment of their clubs may have meant that what has previously been considered to be informal/unmediated learning (Mallett et al., 2009; Nash & Collins, 2006; Nelson et al., 2006; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006; Trudel et al., 2013) may have been misrecognised, as it has been shown here to be a subversive form of formal learning, conducted every day in a manner which is more discreet and coercive.

By investigating both structural process and agency action, how this subjugated knowledge, values and beliefs are acquired has been found to be at the intersection of the conscious and sub-conscious level during a competitive-athletic career, which is then carried over into the initial stages of a novice coaching career. Moreover, strategic and discursive practices for elite athletes who embodied the perceived appropriate values of each club were imposed to firstly encourage a coaching pathway but to secondly further normalise these

values into being accepted as taken for granted conventions that were unquestioned and consented to. Yet the third iteration reported how some of the coaches became self-reflexive agents, employing technologies of the self when creating their own coaching identity and consciously decided to either conform to or contest their club's regimes of truth (i.e. coaching and playing philosophies). Such agential interactions within these structural fields signified a more relational conceptualisation of power and in so doing further indicated conscious reflexivity to be an underdeveloped aspect to Bourdieu's theory of habitus and practice (Noble & Watkins, 2003 – see sections 5.6 & 6.4.4). As such, the iteration's data suggested the pertinence and applicability of Foucault's theoretical framework which the thesis' GT model depicts (figure 13, p.274). In so doing, the importance placed by the coaches on 'honesty' and 'staying true to their selves' for the purposes of attaining athlete to coach respect identified the inapplicability of Goffman's concepts (section 6.4.6) to conceptually explain the social processes for how elite athletes negotiated the career pathway when consolidating a new coaching identity.

From a structural perspective, the directors perceived the attainment of athlete to coach respect as of central importance. From an agential perspective, attaining athlete respect as a developing coach was also imperative (Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014; Potrac et al., 2002) but had to be balanced with the expectations of the club and their own aesthetic self-stylization perceptions of their true selves as developing coaches (sections 6.4.4 – 6.4.7). Negotiating these power balances resulted in a transformation of the self from possessing an athletic identity to a coach identity (Jacobs et al., 2016). This juncture occurred through heightened levels of self-reflexivity (Zehntner & McMahon, 2014) instigated by the respective 'senior pros' coaching courses. Therein for the elite-athletes undertaking the 'fast-tracked' pathway to a post-athletic coaching career, the centrality placed on developing a coaching identity and attaining athlete to coach respect shaped their experiences. As has been reported in the thesis (section 6.4.5), for some of the coaches this was a seemingly

fluent process, whereas for others it was somewhat problematic. Interestingly, at this point two types of coaches were categorised in regards to how they further refined and developed their coaching philosophies and thus coach identities: those with a fixed mind set who were not intending to further change or adapt against those with an open ‘fluid’ mind set (section 6.4.7). This particular finding contrasts to the ubiquitously upheld view that coach development is an ongoing and cyclical process (Cushion, 2007; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Cushion et al., 2003; Turner et al., 2012) as those coaches with a fixed mind-set inferred that their coach development had culminated once they had attained accreditation from the ‘senior pros’ courses. Once more, this finding contrasts to the claim that coach development ‘solely’ originates ‘from self-directed learning and practical coaching experience’ (Sherwin et al., 2017, p.277).

## **8.2 Study limitations**

As the intention of such qualitative research is to look deeply into phenomena in an attempt to elicit meaning other than just cause and effect (Corbin & Strauss 1988), the timescales and other resources required to do this means that the likelihood of recruiting smaller samples is increased when compared to research situated within other paradigms (Jones, 2014). As such, the number of participants recruited for each of the thesis’ iterations may be considered as a limitation of the thesis. By locating the research within the fields of elite sport and having highly defined sampling criteria for all three empirical iterations has also exacerbated the issue of participant recruitment and each iteration’s sample sizes. I have found the two fields of AF and RU high-performance sport to have clandestine subcultures where very few were willing to speak freely on their practices for fear of giving ‘trade secrets’ away to their competitors. Others before me (e.g. Horrocks et al., 2016; Kelly &

Harris, 2010; Kelly & Waddington, 2006; Stevenson, 1999) have successfully utilised their own previous experiences as professional sportspeople to gain access to these high-performance sporting fields. I did not possess these experiences, however, and through the course of the project I began to feel myself as very much an ‘outsider’ trying to overcome a significant level of scepticism in order to gain access inside these fields (section 1.1.2). Irrespective of this, however, I feel that the participants sampled and the data collected from them was rich in nature.<sup>72</sup> I attempted to mitigate any of the participants’ concerns in respect of disclosure and confidentiality, which could have detrimentally impacted upon the validity and trustworthiness of the data, by ensuring that: a) the set ethical conditions of each study within all correspondence were explicitly stated, and; b) that interviews were strategically structured in their semi-structured nature to include questions that probed each participant’s thoughts for the purposes of eliciting reliable, honest and accurate responses (see sections 4.2.4 - 4.2.5).

Moreover, the integration of transcript member checking (Carlson, 2010) was a process designed to overcome concerns of inaccuracy but one which I recognise had its limitations (see footnote 36 in section 4.2.5, p.93). Upon completion of the third iteration I became more aware of these limitations. For example, at the start of the third iteration’s second phase interviews I reminded all participants of the study’s ethical agreements. One participant admitted here that after his first interview he received the email containing his transcript but he had not been “bothered” to check it. Hence, upon reflection, to enhance participant engagement during this process I would in future replace the entire transcript with a condensed researcher memo. This researcher memo would highlight some of the interpreted themes to determine if such interpretations were accurate. I would also follow this process by meeting with a selection of participants to further discuss accuracy (see

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<sup>72</sup> To support this claim I direct the reader back to Billy’s two statements in section 6.4.5 (p.237-8) who expressed his confidence in disclosing confidential information to me, which he conceded he would not have disclosed to his assigned formal mentor within his ‘senior pros’ course.

Swann et al., 2016). Nevertheless, I believe that the manner in which I conducted the interviews and analysed the data was rigorous and strengthens the validity of the thesis' results. Ultimately, I believe the thesis is a substantial body of work based on 52 interviews conducted over 35 hours.

The data the thesis has reported has enabled a GT to be developed which 'fits', 'works' and has 'relevance' for the overarching research statement. It provides a significant, original and informed contribution to understanding coach development by extending our conceptual and methodological understanding on the phenomena for these substantive populations. It is also 'modifiable' by account of it being a middle-range theory as it does not intend to depict the 'fast-track' pathway of *all* coaches with a competitive-athletic tenure in *all* sports. With this in mind, the next section suggests how the results can inform policy associated to such a substantive population. After this the thesis concludes by proposing future research directions whereby a formal theory of the phenomenon can be developed.

### **8.3 Implications for policy on coach education and coach recruitment**

The findings engendered from the third iteration show NGBs need to further emphasise candidates' understanding of pedagogical knowledge within their 'senior pros' coach education courses. The finding that many of the coaches conflated the terms of coaching philosophy and playing philosophy, or were at least more confident to speak about their playing philosophies, grounds this recommendation. The majority of the coaches prioritised their focus on performance outputs of playing strategies instead of throughputs of coaching skills and knowledge which are employed to attain these outputs (section 6.4.4). This seems particularly important when the coaches and directors prioritise the development and refinement of coaches' 'philosophies'.

Indeed, the benefits to the actual process for expediting elite athletes' transition into post-athletic coaching roles may require further consideration. The basis of this point is made by the third iteration's data suggesting that it was only when the coaches attended the 'senior pros' formal coach education courses that they became consciously self-reflexive in developing their coaching identities. Until this point, the coaches had been socialised into their respective club's fields through their athletic careers and their previous introductory coaching roles. This resulted in the coaches having subconsciously consented to their respective club's regimes of truth as docile bodies and therein socially reproducing what can be considered in some cases as traditional coach behaviour and coaching practice (Cushion et al., 2003). Resulting from this, the coaches were recorded to have mimicked the practices and dispositions of their previous coaches (Jones et al., 2003), a practice which brought limited benefits for their coach development (section 6.4.4).

On this basis therefore, it may be beneficial for NGBs to introduce elite athletes who are intending on entering a post-athletic coaching career to their formal coach education programmes earlier in their competitive-athletic careers. This is because it was these courses which provided the coaches with the 'freedom' (Foucault, 1988b) to engage in technologies of the self to then identify the various regimes of truth which they had been subconsciously socialised to. The caveat to this however is that such a proposition would not have the desired impact on those coaches categorised as 'accidental coaches' as 'accidental coaches' did not intend on attaining a post-athletic coaching role during their competitive-athletic careers and therefore did not enrol onto any formal coach accreditation (section 6.4.2). Nonetheless, implementing such a recommendation may positively impact on the development of those categorised as 'aspirational coaches' on the basis that there was not any recorded difference for when these coaches became reflexive and aware of their field's regimes of truth in comparison to the 'accidental coaches'.

NGBs encouraging current competitive-athletes to enrol onto formal coach education



courses earlier in their careers may also avoid candidates experiencing elevated levels of hysteresis and rejecting the NGB's 'espoused course culture' to the extent that was recorded. Encouraging prospective coaches to become more reflexive and cognisant of their respective field's regimes of truth may assist in a more fluent transition into coaching upon retirement as a competitive-athlete. This seems particularly important when 38% of the third iteration's participants who had retired from competitive-play continued to seek a permanent or full-time coaching role (section 6.3). Moreover, to achieve a more fluent transition into a post-athletic coaching role, then the consideration for NGBs to adapt their mentoring processes may be of benefit. Extending the formal mentor-mentee relationship to include informal mentors, who the thesis categorised as 'significant others', may facilitate this transition furthermore and avoid novice coaches encountering an internal conflict when negotiating the numerous structural tensions associated with their coach development (sections 6.4.5 & 6.5). Furthermore, once some of the coaches successfully gained accreditation from the 'senior pros' courses they were recorded to have a fixed-mind set towards their future philosophical development. To avoid these coaches not continuing to employ self-reflexive strategies for continuing their development, NGBs may well wish to consider implementing further mentoring processes with these coaches.

Taking a different line, the thesis' results also provide an original contribution to knowledge by advancing our understanding of the lack of diversity of men's AF and RU high-performance coaches within England. The theoretical explanation for the 'fast-track' pathway has identified how directors' preferred practices of 'drawing athletes through' into post-athletic high-performance roles may contravene UK employment law and its legislation pertaining to the Equality Act 2010. Designed to legally protect people in the workplace and in wider society, The Act stipulates (*Equality Act, 2010, s.39*):

'An employer (A) must not discriminate against a person (B) –

(a) In the arrangements A makes for deciding to whom to offer employment;

(b) As to the terms on which A offers B employment;

(c) By not offering B employment

In light of the thesis' findings, the arrangements directors make in selecting and then appointing coaches is preferentially weighted towards elite athletes of 'their' clubs. Hence this practice can be seen as a contributory reason for why sports coaching is currently only considered a 'blended profession' rather than having the status of a full profession (Duffy et al., 2011). This statement is made on the basis that because directors prioritise their coach talent identification processes for high-performance coach recruitment, their discursive strategies of 'drawing athletes through' into high-performance coaching roles results in populations who are not able to practise within the field of elite men's AF or RU being indirectly discriminated against. It can be suggested therefore that although women, disabled people and some ethnic minority populations may possess the pre-requisite institutionalised cultural capital (coach accreditation) that the respective sports policy stipulates (e.g. EPPP and EPDG - see section 5.4.1), and therefore be considered on paper to be viable candidates for a high-performance coaching role, their inability to acquire embodied capital from their own competitive-athletic career results in them being discredited as club directors impose symbolic violence onto such populations who lack these forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1990 - section 4.3.5).

Apart from the recent growth of studies which have outlined women's coach pathways (Barker-Ruchti et al., 2014; Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2011; *inter-alia* – please refer back to footnote 30 in section 3.3, p.72), which have highlighted the difficulties women encounter when entering into a coaching career, the lack of disabled people or ethnic minorities attaining high-performance coaching roles within elite men's AF and RU has not

been a phenomenon the sports coaching literature has analysed as of yet.<sup>73</sup> However, the lack of ethnic diversity for head coaches within the NFL in the United States of America has been analysed by scholars (DuBois, 2015; Madden, 2004; Madden & Ruther, 2009; Solow, Solow & Walker, 2011) and has been supplemented by a notable level of media discourse on this topic. The cumulative effect of this research and media discourse has resulted in the NFL introducing the Rooney Rule in 2002 – a positive discrimination or affirmative action policy requiring professional NFL teams when recruiting for a new head coach to shortlist and interview at least one candidate from a minority ethnic background. Indeed, the Rooney Rule has been reported to have been successful in addressing the representation of racial and ethnic minority head coaches since its implementation (Madden & Ruther, 2011). Therefore, a central recommendation of the thesis, based on its results, is that high-performance men's AF and RU in England consider introducing a similar policy which encompasses women, disability and ethnic minority populations in order to address and overcome the lack of diversity for populations occupying coaching roles within these fields.

#### **8.4 Future research recommendations**

Based on the modifiability criteria of GT, I have reserved making concluding generalisations towards the thesis' GT by only labelling it as 'tentative'. The middle-range GT the thesis has presented is therefore not considered to be the finite 'end point' to

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<sup>73</sup> Cashmore and Cleland (2011) authored a discussion article on the lack of black and minority ethnic AF high-performance managers within the UK by surveying spectators' opinions on the topic via a web based platform. It was concluded that 'while black managers are scarce when compared to the number of black players in professional football, their presence is actually an accurate reflection of their number in the total British population' (*ibid*, p.1594). The authors nevertheless still presented the analogy that 'association football has, in recent years, morphed into an industry, specifically an entertainment industry. If it were a circus, black players would be part of its main attraction: like lions, perhaps, but rarely lion tamers and never ringmasters' (*ibid*, p.1605-6) to depict that although there are many elite black AF athletes, they seldom transition into high-performance coaching roles.

theorising the phenomena. As such, in order to refine the middle-range theory for then developing a formal GT for the 'fast-track' transition of elite athlete to high-performance coach, the following recommendations I believe would help future research to achieve this.

- 1) Extend the timescales for when data is collected when researching the lived experiences of agents who negotiate the high-performance coach pathway, whether 'fast-tracked' or not. After identifying the two categories of 'fixed' and 'fluid' coaches towards their continued professional development, it would be advantageous to collect additional data to determine if further development had been consciously undertaken and how. Moreover, because 38% of the sample had not successfully made the transition from elite athlete to high-performance coach, as they had not attained a full-time coaching position at the time of the second interviews, interviewing the coaches for a third time (a minimum of 10 to 12 months later) will enable further insight into the pathway to be attained.
- 2) Analyse other UK team sports where the 'fast-track' transition may occur in order to identify if the structural processes and agency actions reflect the present thesis' results. At the project's inception rugby league was not included because the 'fast-track' pathway was not a regularly occurring phenomenon within this sport (section 3.3). This may now have changed and the pathway may have become more prominent in this sport and other UK sports, and as such, may well benefit from receiving analysis. Moreover, other sports with a 'fast-track' pathway may integrate their elite coach education programmes with other organisations' coach education programmes such as UK Sport's Elite Coaching Apprenticeship Programme (Sports Coach UK, 2011; UK Sport, n.d.). This means that some of the concepts identified in the present GT may require further analysis in these fields to determine similarities or differences.

- 3) Analyse sports situated within different international fields. The thesis' overview of literature (chapter three) identified a number of empirical studies which have noted the pathway between elite athlete and high-performance coach (fast-tracked or not) to occur in a number of international sports, most notably sports associated to Northern America and Australia. With these sports falling under different NGBs, their policy and legislation for coach education may influence the pathway in a different manner. This may well be most notable within the United States of America where there are no recognised coach education structures like those found within Great Britain, Canada or Australia for example.
- 4) Analyse the 'fast-track' elite athlete to high-performance coach pathway within individual sports. These sports may also have different subcultures and policies associated to coach development which effects the pathway. For instance, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) of Great Britain stipulate that for any coach wanting to enrol onto their level three certificate in coaching or above must meet pre-requisite criteria. One of these criteria is for applicant coaches to have a minimum 'play rating'. If this is not attained through a candidate's own playing experiences then the applicant coach is required to pass a 'Play Test' to gain enrolment (LTA, 2016). These criteria suggest support for the elite athlete to high-performance coach pathway, yet justification for imposing these criteria has not received empirical analysis. Therefore, analysis of whether the LTA or any other individual sports NGBs also support the elite athlete to high-performance coach pathway, 'fast-tracked' or not, would be of benefit for the field.
- 5) Investigate women's coaching pathways. Women's sports were not included within the thesis because the pathway had not been reported to be a regularly occurring event (section 3.3). Since the research began, anecdotally, within the UK there have been some high profile athletes who have made this transition (i.e. within the Netball Superleague). Although there is a growing body of literature

which focusses on women's experiences as coaches within sport (section 3.3) that has shown the additional social and cultural issues they face, as of yet, there has not been any focussed analysis on their transitions from elite athlete to high-performance coach. The growth of women's sports within the UK and internationally therefore warrants further analysis on how coaches practicing within these fields develop and negotiate a high-performance and potential 'fast-track' coach pathway.

When conducting further studies of women's high-performance coach pathways, such research may benefit by considering a more gendered analysis on masculine ideologies in coaching practice and of coaching philosophy/regimes of truth. A gendered analysis on coaching philosophy has not been undertaken within the field and may prove to be very informative to explain some of the additional barriers women coaches may face when attaining formalised coaching qualifications and whilst accumulating direct and/or indirect coaching experiences.

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## Appendix A – Pilot Study Letter of Invitation

University of Lincoln,  
Brayford Campus,  
Human Performance Centre,  
Lincoln  
LN6 7TS

Office tel: 01522 837061  
Email: [ablackett@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:ablackett@lincoln.ac.uk)

### **RE: Invitation for research participation**

Study title: *Understanding the transition between elite athlete and elite coach*

Principal Researcher: *Alex Blackett*

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Dear (Insert name),

I am a PhD researcher in the School of Sports and Exercise Science at the University of Lincoln and I would like to invite you to participate in a research project which focuses on analysing the developmental pathways of sports coaches and managers within association football and rugby union. My particular interest is the quick transition of retiring athletes into coaching and management positions and how such knowledge for their newly acquired role is attained. As part of the investigation, I am conducting a pilot study to understand the difference between what a 'coach' is and what a 'manager' is from the perspective of their employers. Due to you being affiliated to (Insert Club Name), I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about your opinions on this topic. The only requirement is that you are in a position central to the recruitment process of employing coaches or managers and are available to schedule an interview with myself before **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2012**.

It is anticipated that interviews will last for approximately 45 minutes to 60 minutes and would be arranged at a time most convenient for you. Involvement in the interview is completely voluntary and with your permission the interview will be tape-recorded. All information which you provide will be treated as confidential. As this is a pilot study, once the interview has been completed, I will be asking you to follow this up with some feedback regarding its delivery. If you agree to participate in the study, then could I kindly ask for you to complete the enclosed form and return it to the above address by post or email? If, after receiving this letter, you have any questions about this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact me using the above details.

Please forward all correspondence to the above details and I will establish contact with you again shortly afterwards. Thank you in advance for your interest in this study and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

**Alex Blackett**

*Instructor in Sport (Social Sciences) and PhD researcher*

Date:

## Appendix B - Participant Detail Confirmation Form

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Please complete this form and return to Mr Alex Blackett in the enclosed addressed envelope or by email to [ablackett@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:ablackett@lincoln.ac.uk)

Name:

Affiliated Club:

Job Title at Club:

Date of Birth:

Preferred email address to be contacted on:

Preferred phone number to be contacted on:

Please tick the appropriate box for each statement:

- One of my roles at the club is recruiting management and playing staff for the playing team.  
Yes ☐ No ☐
- I have previous experience of being on the recruiting panel for management and coaching staff.  
Yes ☐ No ☐
- I will be available to participate in an interview with the researcher before November 30<sup>th</sup> 2012.  
Yes ☐ No ☐
- My preferred location for conducting the interview is:  
.....  
.....
- Please identify which of the below windows of time you are available to participate in an interview.

|  |     |  |     |
|--|-----|--|-----|
| Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> Nov between 6:00pm – 9:30pm  | [ ] | Fri 23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov between 3:30pm – 9:30pm | [ ] |
| Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> Nov between 9am – 12:30pm   | [ ] | Mon 26 <sup>th</sup> Nov between 9am – 12:00pm   | [ ] |
| Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov between 11am – 3:00pm | [ ] | Tues 27 <sup>th</sup> Nov between 9:00pm – 12pm  | [ ] |
| Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> Nov between 6:00pm – 9:00pm | [ ] | Wed 28 <sup>th</sup> Nov between 11am 9:30pm     | [ ] |
| Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> Nov between 10am – 9:30pm | [ ] | Fri 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov between 3pm – 9:30pm    | [ ] |

**Name (Print):**

**Signature of Participant:**

**Date:**

## Appendix C – Iteration 1 Letter of Invitation

University of Lincoln,  
Brayford Campus,  
Human Performance Centre,  
Lincoln  
LN6 7TS

Office tel: 01522 837061  
Email: [ablackett@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:ablackett@lincoln.ac.uk)

### **RE: Invitation for research participation**

Study title: *Understanding the transition between elite athlete and elite coach*

Principal Researcher: *Alex Blackett*

---

Dear Sir or Madame,

I am a PhD researcher at the University of Lincoln's School of Sports and Exercise Sciences and I would like to invite you to participate in a research project which focuses on analysing the developmental pathways of sports coaches and managers within association football and rugby union. My particular interest is the transition of retiring athletes into coaching and management positions and how such knowledge for their newly acquired role is attained. As part of the investigation, I am conducting a study identifying the roles and responsibilities between a 'coach' and 'manager' from the perspective of their employers. In addition to this, I am also analysing what employers perceive the necessary attributes are for the two roles and how these competencies are not only evidenced but developed by prospective candidates. Due to your position at a professional club, I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about your opinions on this topic. The only requirement is that you are currently in a position central to the recruitment process of employing coaches or managers.

I am hoping that you are able to schedule an interview with myself before **Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2013**. It is anticipated that interviews will last for approximately 30 minutes to 45 minutes and would be arranged at a time most convenient for you. Involvement in the interview is completely voluntary and with your permission the interview will be tape-recorded. All information which you provide will be treated as confidential. If you agree to participate in the study, then could I kindly ask for you to complete and return the appended 'Participant Detail Confirmation Form' via the above address by post or email? If, after receiving this letter, you have any questions about this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact me using the above details. Please forward all correspondence before **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2013** and I will establish contact with you again shortly afterwards. Thank you in advance for your interest in this study and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

**Alex Blackett**

*Instructor in Sport (Social Sciences) and PhD researcher*  
Date:

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## Appendix E – Iteration 2 Letter of Invitation

University of Lincoln,  
Brayford Campus,  
Human Performance Centre,  
Lincoln  
LN6 7TS

Office tel: 01522 837061  
Email: [ablackett@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:ablackett@lincoln.ac.uk)

### RE: Research participation invite

Study title: *Understanding the transition between elite athlete and elite coach*

Principal Researcher: *Alex Blackett*

Dear Sir,

I am a PhD researcher in the School of Sports and Exercise Science at the University of Lincoln and I would like to invite you to participate in an interview as part of a research project which focuses on analysing the developmental pathways of sports coaches and managers within association football and rugby union. My particular interest is the quick transition of retiring athletes into coaching and management positions and how such knowledge for their newly acquired role is attained. As part of the investigation, I am conducting a study on identifying the different skill sets required for a 'coach' and a 'head coach' from the perspective of their employers and how the recruitment process is undertaken. Subsequently, if the below criteria applies to you and your role, I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about your opinions on this topic. The criteria are as follows;

- You are or have been in a position central to the recruitment process of employing coaching and management staff of your professional club's academy.
- You are available to schedule an interview with myself before **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2013**.

It is anticipated that interviews will last for no longer than 30 minutes and would be arranged at a time and location most convenient for you. Involvement in the interview is completely voluntary and with your permission the interview will be tape-recorded. All information which you provide will be treated as confidential and your anonymity will be maintained throughout the entirety of the study. If you agree to participate, then could I kindly ask for you to complete the section below and return it to the above address by post or email? If, after receiving this letter, you have any questions about this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact me using the above details.

Please complete and forward the below slip before **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2013** and I will establish contact with you again shortly afterwards. Thank you in advance for your interest in this study and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,  
**Alex Blackett**

*Instructor in Sport (Social Sciences) and PhD researcher*

Date:

Name:

Affiliated club:

Job title at club:

Preferred email address to be contacted on:

Preferred phone number to be contacted on:

Please signify your preferred dates and times for an interview to be arranged:

.....  
.....

Please specify where you wish to conduct the interview:

.....  
.....

## Appendix F – Iteration 3 Letter of Invitation

University of Lincoln,  
Brayford Campus,  
Human Performance Centre,  
Lincoln  
LN6 7TS

Office tel: 01522 837061  
Email: [ablackett@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:ablackett@lincoln.ac.uk)

### **RE: Invitation to participate in research**

Study title: *Understanding the transition between elite athlete and elite coach*

---

Dear (Insert name),

I am a PhD researcher in the School of Sports and Exercise Science at the University of Lincoln and I would like to invite you to participate in an interview as part of a research project. The project focuses on the developmental pathways of elite sports coaches in association football and rugby union. My particular interest is the transition of retiring athletes into coaching and management positions and how they acquire knowledge, skills and experience relevant to the role during their playing careers.

Subsequently, if the criteria below apply to you, I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about your views on the research topic. The criteria are as follows:

- You are currently a professional football or rugby union player, or have recently retired from playing in the last 12 months.
- You now intend on following a coaching career in your respective sport.
- You are available to schedule *two* interviews with me: the first before **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2013** and the second a ***maximum of 12 months after the first.***

It is anticipated that interviews will last between 20-30 minutes and would be arranged at a time and location most convenient for you. The interview questions will cover the following topics: your motivation for moving into a coaching career; your desired field of work (e.g. elite senior teams, academy); the perceived skills and attributes of effective coaches; the impact of a playing career on developing these skills and attributes; and the prospects of being employed.

Involvement in the interview is completely voluntary and, with your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded. ***All information which you provide will be treated as confidential and your anonymity will be maintained throughout the study.***

If you agree to participate, then I would ask kindly for you to complete the section below and return it directly to me as soon as possible. If, after receiving this letter, you have any questions about this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact me using the above details.

I will establish contact with you again shortly after receiving the overleaf slip to confirm a date, time and location for an interview to be completed. Thank you in advance for your interest in this study and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

**Alex Blackett**

*Instructor in Sport (Social Sciences) and PhD researcher*

Date:

PTO

Name:

.....

Preferred email address to be contacted on:

.....  
.....  
.....

Preferred phone number to be contacted on:

.....  
.....  
.....

Preferred dates and times for an interview to be arranged:

.....  
.....  
.....

Preferred location for the interview:

.....  
.....  
.....

## **Appendix G – Iteration 3 Participant Information Sheet**

Study Title: **Understanding the transition between elite athlete and elite coach**

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

### **What is the purpose of the study?**

To understand the transition between elite player and elite coach by identifying the acquisition and development of coaching content knowledge during competitive playing careers.

### **Why have I been invited?**

*Due to your enrolment on your national governing body's senior professional players' level 3 coaching course, you have been invited to participate in the study to discuss the impact which your professional playing career has had on developing your coaching skills and knowledge. With your experience of being a professional player and your indicated desire to potentially remain within coaching and management of your sport, your opinions on this topic area would be insightful in assisting towards clarifying the study's research title.*

### **What would be involved for me?**

*You will be required to participate in two tape-recorded interviews which should last no longer than 45 minutes in duration. Both interviews will be conducted in a place of your choosing and at times most convenient for you. The first interview is intended to be completed before the end of July 2013 and the second completed between November 2013 and the end of June 2014.*

*Following each interview (up to one week after), you will be provided with the opportunity to clarify and amend any comments made on the transcript which the principal researcher will forward to you. This is not a mandatory process but one which has to be afforded to you so you can make any amendments if deemed necessary.*

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

*Participating in the two interviews may enable you to generate a better understanding of your overall coaching philosophy and identify the main reasons as for why you have developed it in such a way. By exploring this issue, it may help you generate a better understanding of a coach's and manager's role. Additionally, by identifying and explaining the skills and attributes required for prospective coaches and managers, it may assist you in constructing a more accurate and detailed overview of where you future career ambitions may rest.*

*The study's findings can also be of benefit to coach education programmes for the associated national governing bodies, by informing and potentially contributing towards*



*making coach education programmes even more specified for players moving into coaching or managerial careers.*

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of participation?**

*There are no foreseen disadvantages or risks of participating in the study.*

**Do I have to take part?**

*Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw at any time. Should you withdraw from the study after the interview has been conducted, you have the right to request that your data be deleted. For all of your data to be deleted, you need to verbally submit this request to the researcher within 72 hours of the interview finishing otherwise all of your data will be retained.*

**What do I need to do if I wish to take part?**

*Please read this Information Sheet and ask any questions that you may have about the process. If you are happy to be involved then please read and sign the attached Consent Form, and return it to the investigator.*

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

*All information which you provide will be treated as confidential. All data collected will be stored in a secure location and then disposed of three years later. All information you provide will be kept anonymous whereby any references you make to any individual or club which can result in your information being traced back to you will be coded. Your anonymity will be preserved throughout the duration of the study. This includes any published work when submitted for the purposes of completing the study's thesis, conference proceedings or assisting in the development of the NGB's coaching education provision.*

**What if I have any concerns or queries?**

*For issues relating to the project, please contact either the investigator Alex Blackett on the below contact details or the project supervisor Dr. Dave Piggott (email: [REDACTED], tel: [REDACTED]) or Dr. Adam Evans (email: [REDACTED], tel: [REDACTED]).*

If you would like to talk to someone about ethical issues relating to the project, please contact either the above named persons or alternatively **Professor David Mullineaux:** [REDACTED] at the University of Lincoln.

Thank you for taking time to read this information:

**Alex Blackett**

**University of Lincoln, Human Performance Centre, Brayford Campus, Lincoln, LN6 7TS**

**Email: [ablackett@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:ablackett@lincoln.ac.uk)**

**Office tel: 01522 837061**

## Appendix H - Iteration 3 Consent Form

I agree to take part in this research project which involves **participating in an interview**. Any information I provide will remain **strictly confidential**.

- The full details of the research have been explained to me and I am fully aware of what is expected of me as a participant.
- I am aware that I am not obliged to complete the interviews and provide the researcher with any associated feedback and that I am able to stop at any point, for any reason.
- I am aware that the research results and any information I have provided are fully confidential and will only be communicated to others if agreed so in advance.
- I am aware that my participation in this study is completely voluntary. If I decide not to participate there will not be any negative consequences. I am aware that if I decide to participate, I may choose to withdraw at any time and from the point of withdrawing from the study, I have 72 hours to be able to ask that any data collected concerning myself is destroyed.
- I have read and understand the information above, and any questions that I had have been fully answered. I agree to participate in this study.

**Name (Print):**

**Signature of Participant:**

**Date:**

If the participant is under the age of eighteen:

**Name (Print): N/A**

**Date: N/A**

**Signed (Parent/Guardian) N/A**

I declare that I have explained the testing procedure in full and have made myself available for any questions the participant may wish to ask.

**Name (Print): Alex Blackett**

**Signature of Researcher:**

**Date:**

## **Appendix I – Iteration 1 Interview Schedule**

Position/role within club

Experience

- Time in current position
- Previous roles – coach, DoR/manager, athlete
- Career pathway

Structure of club

- Reason for structure
- Role of coaches, DoR/manager

Interpretation of effective/successful coaching, DoR/manager

- Importance of respect for coach, DoR/manager
- Status – how is respect attained?
- Athlete perceptions
- Spectator perceptions

Coach talent identification

- Importance of an athletic career
- Value of being an ex-player
- Key performance indicators – what are they?
- Value of formal coaching qualifications
- Value of ‘fast-tracking’
- Club, coaching and playing philosophy – meaning and importance

Recruitment

- Processes – interviews, shortlisting
- Questions asked during interviews
- Who decides

Going forward

- How would you recruit?
- Who would you target?

Reiteration of ethics

## Appendix J – Iteration 2 Interview Schedule

Position/role within club/academy

Experience

- Time in current position
- Previous roles – coach, DoR/manager, athlete

Career pathway

Structure of academy

- Reason for structure
- Role of academy coaches
- Club philosophy – academy and first/senior team relationship

Interpretation of effective/successful coaching at academy level

- Importance of respect for academy coach
- Status – how is respect attained?
- Athlete perceptions
- Spectator perceptions

Coach talent identification

- Importance of an athletic career
- Value of being an ex-player
- Key performance indicators – what are they?
- Value of formal coaching qualifications
- Value of ‘fast-tracking’
- Educational processes
  - Internal and external
  - Internal – how, who, what, why and when
  - Importance of club, coaching and playing philosophy

Recruitment

- Processes – interviews, shortlisting
- Questions asked during interviews
- Who decides

Going forward

- How would you recruit?
- Who would you target?

Reiteration of ethics

## **Appendix K – Iteration 3 Interview Schedule: First Phase**

Participant background

- Competitive athletic career

Motivation/reason for transitioning into a post-athletic coaching career

Views on formal coaching qualifications

Knowledge development

- What, what, where and how
- Led/instigated by individual or others

Value of coach-athlete respect (capital)

- How is respect obtained? (practice)
- Importance of ex-competitive athletic career (field)

Coaching pathway

- Coaching roles whilst playing – where and when
- Previous coaching qualifications – why and why not obtained at this point?

Perceptions and thoughts of coaching

- Coaching and playing philosophy (habitus, docile bodies)
- Club culture (folding, subjectivity, surveillance)
- Strengths and areas for development (reflexivity)

Development/projections forward

- Aspirations
- Role of mentors/significant others – informal/formal

Reiteration of ethics and clarification of follow up interviews in 12 months times.

## **Appendix L – Iteration 3 Interview Schedule: Second Phase**

Current position/role(s)

- What's changed?
- How and why?

Impact of qualifications – thoughts/views of them; knowledge; worthwhile or not?

Field – effect

- How are you getting on in your role(s)?

What have you gained since we last spoke?

- Importance of these

Opinions/views of coaching changed?

Impact on development – who, where, how & why?

- Relationships

Mentorships – external and internal to coaching qualifications

Conscious development/change – aware of reflexivity – change of practice?

- Examples of change

Coaching and playing philosophy – what are they? Changed?

Habitus & capital – player perspectives of you as a coach?

Going forward

- Aspirations
- Barriers/constraints

Reiteration of ethics

## Appendix M – Interview Transcript Example

Participant Kieran (football) – Iteration 3 - second phase interview

(Italics = Alex/interviewer; regular text = Kieran/interviewee)

*I'll just outline the confidentiality agreements, they are the same as last time I spoke to you that I'll be keeping it completely anonymous and I won't be disclosing your identity to anyone and at the end of the interview I'll transcribe up what's been said and I'll forward over a copy of the interview to you so you can have a check over, I'll do that via email. Is that ok?*

Yeah that's fine yeah.

*Grand, well I spoke to you last year, I believe it was toward the end of September, I just wanted to touch base really and see what's happened over that past year regarding your coach development?*

Yeah I had a season at (current Championship football club 1) with the sixteens which I mentioned before and then with the takeover at (current Championship football club 1) they subsequently made people redundant, I was one of those with numerous other coaches. So in the summer I just found myself out of work really with coaching, so I applied for a few jobs and I'm currently the under eighteens development coach at (current Championship football club 2).

*Oh so how long have you been there then?*

I started last Tuesday so I've been there just over a week.

*And you're working with the same age groups within the academy as you were in (current Championship football club 1)?*

Yeah it's within the academy it's just a little bit older, it's under eighteens whereas with (current Championship football club 1) it was under sixteens. So probably a preferred role which you know for myself is a better job and a step up for me really. Although losing my job at (current Championship football club 1) I've ended up with a sort of job that I really enjoy and probably the age group I'd like to be working with really.

*Ok, so over the past year then if you're reflecting on what's happened how did the coaching role go on for you, work out for you?*

Yeah it was totally different from playing and I was left to my own devices at (current Championship football club 1) so it was a big learning curve and one you know I enjoyed, a few up and downs of you know the reality of sort of a bit cliché working you know. I've always been a professional footballer for sixteen years and then going into a working environment you know was a big learning curve for me. And one I suppose I wasn't prepared for but you know I really enjoyed it and just threw myself into the coaching and thoroughly enjoyed you know the benefits you get from coaching and you know I see it as a pathway I want to continue with.

*Right, and when I first met you last year you were on the UEFA B course.*

Yes.



*What's happened on that front?*

So I, because of the new EPPP I got that early I had to pass that early which was before last Christmas so I spoke to you September I got that in December and I'm currently on the A licence now. So I've done the first year on my A licence this summer, I did a two week block at St. George's Park so I'm currently working towards that, I go back again next summer for another two weeks. So yeah I ended up I got that qualification and I'm looking forward to the A licence now and trying to get that under my belt.

*Yeah because I remember you saying last year that that was an ambition of yours, how have those formal qualifications been and how have they informed you of your coaching?*

God you know I've enjoyed the qualifications. Like I said again it's totally different you know now you know you play football all of your career and dedicate yourself to that and now you are looking at it a little bit differently and having to spend a lot of time on the qualifications, they are not easy they don't just give you qualifications now so that's been sort of a learning curve as well but I've thoroughly enjoyed them, especially the B licence, there was a bit of pressure on that because to work in an academy you need your B licence, that's sort of the standard going qualification. But now doing the A I can, having been on the course this summer I can see how it does develop you as a coach and you now sort of give you that experience that you need.

*So in what ways have you developed as a coach then?*

I'd say confidence, and stepping out of my comfort zone just in terms of what they try to teach you on the courses, you know they try and give you the knowledge which you've already got to set up a session but you know you're going into an environment last year I was dealing with parents, complaints from parents, you know you've got to release a kid who's sixteen and he's been there for ten years, you know sort real life experience and you now organisational skills, if you are playing away for instance, we played (current Championship football club 3) last year, you've got to organise with the parents, the kids, the timings, just little things really like you know as a footballer I'd been told where to be what time to be there and then I was the one who's sort of having to organise all of that which you know is probably just life skills which people sort of take for granted but you now I've been thrown into the position where I've got to sort of sink or swim really. And you know they are the sort of things that they don't teach you on the courses which are part and parcel of every coaching job really.

*And what other things that you've found that you've really developed over the past year then in a coaching capacity?*

I'd say a willingness to learn, I mean when you are playing you've got really strong opinions and you know the thought of you know very selfish thoughts as in you're playing for yourself and you're family you know, you want to get in the first team and stuff, when you start your coaching there's so many different philosophies and ideas out there and other coach's ideas. You know that's the sort of thing I've really enjoyed is watching the other coaches and you know trying to learn from coaches, then looking back on my career and thinking oh that manager did this or a coach might have done a different session you know, little things like that I've picked up. You know I've enjoyed sort of reading, especially for the A licence you know you've got to go and study a little bit and read and sort of gain a bigger knowledge or a more vast knowledge of what you are trying to achieve really.

*Yeah so how do you see yourself as a coach now, now that you've had a full year in post at (current Championship football club 1)?*

Yeah still inexperienced I mean I went for a few jobs this summer and you now that get pinpointed all of the time I'm inexperienced really as a coach and still learning. I've mentioned before that on the A licence they talk about your philosophy and you've got to establish how you want to play and mine is still evolving really, which is quite you know it's quite enjoyable and I'm the sort of person who you know I do like to learn you now my philosophy is not set in stone yet and that's quite an exciting thing you know I'm learning every day. I mean I've gone into (current Championship football club 2) now there's to (current Championship football club 1) and I'm still developing mine and learning from some other coaches now which you see other people work and you pick up on what they're doing and their knowledge of coaches is it's always changing and you can always learn that some things you know I've sort of picked up on are you can always learn.

*So that was one thing that emerged after speaking to everyone this time last year that the coaching philosophy was really important and particularly as athletes who were retiring and going into coaching wanted to find out their own coaching philosophy but they kind of found out that they had to toe the line so to speak whilst working within an academy or a senior team set up. So is that the same for you?*

Yeah definitely I mean I yeah I found that at (current Championship football club 1). I don't believe you know my philosophy and I don't believe my way of working or philosophy fit in with the academy manager who was there at the time. And that is one of the reasons why I subsequently lost my job and the under eighteens manager did who I played with and we had a different view to

the academy manager and that's one of the reasons why I'm not there anymore. So you know it is a strong, you know you have got to toe the line sometimes and that's the difficult thing, I think being an ex-professional your opinions have always been strong and you know I'd rather be sat here now knowing I tried to do it how I wanted to do it and sort of learn from the courses that I'm doing you now I didn't back down or I wouldn't back down to someone I don't agree with really. Like I said they are very strong opinions, like you're saying within academies... (phone reception lost).

*The signal just dropped off then.*

Yeah so that's the difficult thing really because yeah your philosophy, although they encourage you on the courses to develop your own, you tend to have to fit in with your job or where you're actually coaching so that's a difficult one really.

*So how did you deal with that over the past year then?*

Well I was lucky I was sort of left to my own devices a little bit, I managed the you know the sort of phase leader, but then again obviously you have meetings and you get told how to do things and you know sometimes you've got to bite your tongue, but sometimes you can't. So that was another thing like you are talking about how has the job been and stuff, that's one thing I've learnt is you know you have to toe the line a bit more than what you did as a player you know.

*Ok, and so overall over this past year and even now in your new role how have the working relationships been then, what have you learnt from and how exactly have you learnt?*

I've been on, well since I spoke to you I mean I've probably been on, well I've done my B licence I've done the module one, two and three and started the A licence. So my year from speaking to you has just been jam packed with courses and information. So you know a lot of the learning that I've come up with or had has come through the PFA really and the FA and all of the courses they've you know you are on. So my learning is quite current really. I think that's one of the reasons why (current Championship football club 2) have got me in, obviously being inexperienced but you know I'm currently finished playing, I'm currently on all of the courses that are getting delivered so that's where my knowledge is sort of coming from, all of the courses that I've been provided with and past experiences of playing.

*So when you've been coaching over this past year how much have you drawn on from your past experiences playing then?*

I think a lot, you have to, well that's where you know all of my sort of experience has come from. So like I said I'm a year into it and if I can pass on some of the experiences that I've had and you know playing at a good level and playing for a long time you know I think it's a bonus really like I can sort of pass that on. Obviously there's a lot of other things you learn on the courses which you know I'm still learning but if I didn't have that experience of playing and the experience I've been through you know it'd have been a lot harder for me. You know to even you know pass these courses it would have been you know very tough but I draw on my past experiences sort of to put my knowledge into practice really.

*And when I've spoken to other participants in the study they've gone onto a lot of the courses delivered by the FA, PFA and RFU in rugby so to speak, and they've almost been barraged with all*

*of this information and they've kind struggled to find out what's best for them, has that been the same for you?*

A little bit, a little bit. I think you know there is a lot of information on the courses but I can actually see the benefit in them and you know so I think there is a lot of information and the thing is now with the EPPP in football you have to have these courses these qualifications. They've made it you know they are trying to make coaching a lot of better in this country and you've got to have the qualifications because they want better coaches. So yeah it is a tough one because you know my, I've tried to cram a lot in really in the last year. You know I have enjoyed it, I've enjoyed the courses, I can't say that you know I wouldn't say to you they are not worthwhile you know I've learnt a lot from them so I can't really complain or you know I don't have any sort of downers on the sort of courses really that I've been on.

*And I ask the question because when you were working at (current Championship football club 1) you had that club connection, you had represented them, how much did that help you out when you retired over the past year?*

Yeah I think you know I think playing especially the respect I had with the younger lads helped me massively. And you know they look at you a little bit differently and when I'm talking to them if I'm telling them what to do or you know talking about experiences I've actually been there so I think it gives you a little bit of credibility really. And it definitely helped me, not to say you know somebody else that hasn't played can't you know put the same sort of information across as a coach but it helped me to be able to draw on those experiences really. I think it's been a massive advantage you know that I have played and had those experiences of you know doing what I've done and that's the sort of professional game helps me with my coaching. I know there are other people on the

course that hadn't really had the sort of playing background as me so I can't say for them really. It's definitely I think been an advantage for me and you know would I have got this job at (current Championship football club 2) if I hadn't had the background that I've had, I don't know, probably not because you know being so inexperienced within the coaching. I'd say that's one of the reasons why I got the job.

*And from speaking to other participants they've kind of realised the same thing that they've got this initial credibility and the players have that buy-in a little bit sooner but then turning it into long term respect has been quite difficult for some people, how's that been for you over the past year?*

I think that's your knowledge, I think anyone sees through that and even as a player you could see some coaches have come and gone when I've been a player and if you don't back your knowledge up players see through you. So like you said that's probably why the courses are put on and have been so in depth because if you don't have the knowledge and I'm telling someone how to do a specific skill or you know talking about a specific time in a game and if I can't back up what I'm saying with knowledge, if they question me then they'll see through you. So you know that's why I understand how in depth these courses are and how demanding they are really.

*And how much have you had to contend with developing a culture within your previous role and your current role?*

Yeah I think that's probably one of the most important things. And again I've probably pulled on experience before, dressing rooms, how certain managers have done things you know and I've sort of drawn on that to set a culture. You know I like, probably one of the main ones for me because I

used to run the sixteens was enjoyment really. Obviously you've got to have discipline in that but you know setting the culture doing the environment is probably one of the biggest things before player development and that's the level I'm coaching at. But I think that's a massive, massive part of your coaching and being a coach is setting the right environment for the players.

*So how exactly do you do that then it seems something a lot of people struggle with?*

Yeah well for me you know even now I think unless you enjoy what you are actually doing as in you know if a kid is coming up an under sixteen is coming and I'm coaching if he's not enjoying it he's not going to learn. So that's what you know you've got, maybe fifteen individuals you've got to sort of entertain and get the best out of them really and make sure they are enjoying it. And if they enjoy it they will learn and they will take in what you are actually trying to tell them. So that was a big thing for me and then also you know the discipline, because if they are coming into a football club the environment is quite a harsh one so you've got to get the standards right from day one. You know a sixteen year old coming into a building with sort of some big names around they've got to be able to be disciplined and understand their role within that football club really.

*And to what extent have you changed as in your coaching practice from when you worked at (current Championship football club 1) to the older age groups that you are working with now, if you have at all?*

I think there's a massive difference with it, I mean at (current Championship football club 1) I did some sessions with sort of the first team players when the reserve team players weren't playing, I did the under sixteens probably down to the under fourteens so I had a vast, sort of last year I had



a big range of players that I had to deal with. You know that's probably helped me this year and I'm also working alongside a guy who's quite experienced, an ex-professional who's the lead phase coach now at (current Championship football club 2) and he's put a lot of those things into place anyway, he's got a lot of discipline in the under eighteens and it's a different age group because they really they are either, it's a make or break time at under eighteen age and they make the decisions on them whether they are going to be given a pro or whether they are going to be released. So it's quite a big sort of development time for those players.

*And I hear a lot when I speak to people is like getting player buy-in, and that's really important and yet when I speak to people they have struggled with that over the past year, how has that affected you in your development over the year?*

Yeah, yeah, some don't, you know it's tough. Probably I think the player buy-in and it's probably one of the main things that you know some personalities don't suite maybe coaching styles or you've got to vary your coaching style and I can understand why people have said that is probably the hardest thing to get right is the buy-in from all of the players. If you are dealing with a squad of fifteen, sixteen players you've got to get every one of them to buy-in to what you are doing and it's quite difficult isn't it. You're dealing with different personalities, different ability groups. So yeah that's something I'm still learning and working on really.

*So when you say still learning on and still working on that, do you play around with different strategies?*

Yeah, yeah, I think, well the current course that I'm on, the modules, the module three that touches

a lot on that, you know it deals with a lot of individuals and I'm still learning all of this sort of stuff the psychology stuff. I mean we've got a psychologist at (current Championship football club 2) who comes in every Thursday and works with our group, you know that's part of us coaches, I mean I bought him from (current Championship football club 1) he's come in from (current Championship football club 1) and he's doing it. And that's obviously trying to work with him on his sort of stuff you know them buying into the sessions and if they don't, the psychologist actually spoke at the beginning and said if you don't buy-in to this it won't work at all. And it's the same with coaching, if they don't buy-in to it, it just won't work, they don't buy-in to your coaching, they won't learn, it just won't work. So it's probably one of the most important things. So they do touch on it a lot in the current courses and module courses.

*So how have you actually achieved that then this year or tried to?*

Tried yeah tried all sorts of different stuff last year, loads of different things. Because at under sixteens you are dealing with such a variety of sort of personalities, you have got parent issues, you've got them going through their exams, you've got issues if they are going to be taken on as a scholar, some of them have already got pre-scholars so you are dealing with all of the different things. So obviously getting them on the training pitch you know I tried different sessions, some players you can see when you are watching don't buy-in to it, some do, some learn differently but it's actually hitting you know at that level you are talking about (current Championship football club 1) and (current Championship football club 2) you've got to hit your best players because that's what you're judged by bringing players through and you've got to sort of bring those on. So that's the hardest thing, you're sort of pinpointing your best players and really developing them whilst working with the group as well.

*So currently now and reflecting over the past year how would you see yourself as a coach then in that regard then and what is your current coaching philosophy?*

I say philosophy is still going, they asked me this at the interview actually at (current Championship football club 2) what was my philosophy and I said it's still developing. And I said the same thing I said to you I believe you know that the players have got to enjoy any session of mine, I want them to enjoy it because they won't learn. Philosophy is not set in stone. Over the last year I wouldn't say football wise it you know doesn't really change, what I've learnt is probably like I said they don't teach you on the courses, the communication skills, organisational skills, and obviously just learning and taking as much in as you can you know because that resources the coach. I don't think you now I don't think there's any formula that's correct or incorrect it's just you know being yourself really.

*So what's been really effective for you then in learning and developing?*

Well I know my style, I know that, I'm not a shouter and a screamer and a baller. You know I'm approachable as a coach, I'm not a stop and stand type of coach you now I'd say the old school where coaching as in you stop you stand still you command, I'm massive believer in ownership and you know the kids actually they've got to learn through experience with me adding a bit of knowledge and a little bit of detail to their game. Like I said I believe you know they must be enjoying it otherwise they won't learn. But there comes a point where they've got to be told you know, if they are getting it wrong time after time then they need to be told but I believe you know in the kids taking a bit of ownership in being themselves and putting sessions on. So like tonight I'll plan my session for tomorrow that will hopefully I won't have to step in and coach and stop the session, they'll actually hit their you know my coaching points because I've planned the session so detailed that it should come out. You know that's my way, whether that's right or wrong that just suits my

personality and that's how you know I hope you ring me in ten years time I'm probably still doing the same but you now with different experiences really and a bit more knowledge.

*So how have you got to that point then because you said you're not like the old school kind of coaches and yet you've probably had hundreds of coaches like that who've coached you over the years?*

Yeah, yeah, I'm not saying that's wrong I don't, you know some people do that style of coaching, I'm just saying you know with my type, if I started going round caching like that it doesn't, it probably doesn't bring out my best qualities and it doesn't really suit my personality so that's just the way that I've enjoyed coaching and you know sort of had some good feedback from when I've left (current Championship football club 1) you know from parents and players alike who you know I've had some really good texts and feedback from a lot of players. So like I said, philosophy is not embedded in stone but I do know my personality and I've probably got the confidence to you know back my knowledge up. If you question me on my coaching I'd be happy you know to sort of back it up with some knowledge but I know my sort of style of coaching probably won't change but philosophy and knowledge and learning probably will change.

*And from, well reflecting over your time at (current Championship football club 1) and even now in your new role, how would you want the players to see you as a coach?*

I think you know I'd like to think that they see me as being honest, approachable and you know someone who's got good knowledge, good detail and you know who has actually helped them. You know not every player that I coach is going to be a Lionel Messi or even a professional footballer,

you know if along the way I can help and improve them you know I believe that's my job done. You know and with a bit of you know sort of friendship along the way. I want them to enjoy their experience they have with me and that's probably you know I'd rather people walk away in two years time being at (current Championship football club 2) and say they've really enjoyed it, they feel they are a better person as well as a better player. So you know that's how I would like to be remembered.

*And from your time at (current Championship football club 1) as well as now at (current Championship football club 2) how much influence has the senior team had on your coaching and how you set sessions up and how you set your team up or have you been quite independent in deciding how you do that?*

Yeah, yeah, I tried to be independent, I've watched a lot of games and probably watch games a lot differently now and like the first team probably influenced, you know I don't get to see that many games, at (current Championship football club 1) last year I probably watched more you know DVD downloaded games of Champions League games, international games. Coaches you know I've watched, I've watched the (current Championship football club 1) first team coaches work and you know copied their sessions and seen if I can make them work with a different age group so you know in terms of that you know watching first team coaches work is invaluable really.

*And what's had the biggest influence on your coaching development then?*

Pardon.

*What's had the biggest influence on your coaching development then?*

It's a tough one really. Like I said you know I said that's probably I've been left to myself a little bit so probably the biggest influence is not somebody actually being mentored by someone it's just actually going out there and learning. You know I was by myself last year you know, this year I'm working with someone which is totally different. Last year I was by myself I was delivering all of the sessions and you know it was invaluable to me, it was a great learning experience and you know that's probably been, it's not been mentored by someone it's actually just being thrown in and it's been like right go put on these sessions and I've just learnt that way. So you know some bad ones some good ones.

*But it's reflecting upon those and tweaking them?*

Yeah, yeah just reflecting on and changing things and being able and being given the licence to you know to do things a little bit differently. You know it's helped me as a coach and like I said the feedback I've got from parents and players in the summer when I left you know was quite overwhelming for me, it was nice you know the people who has contacted me and thanked me you know I thought the feedback was very positive. So no it's been a good experience the first year and like I said it'll be a different one again this year.

*And you said last year that you thought a lot about coaching development a like nicking ideas off people there and borrowing ideas and observing.*

Yeah, yeah.

*So in what way have you actually pinched ideas, have you got any examples?*

Yeah so for instance I'd do in during the day, last year my job was predominantly in the evenings but I was full-time so I'd go in during the day and just watch the under eighteens coach work, I'd watch the first team, the reserve team coach work and you know just jot things down and watch what they were doing and sort of develop it into you know my personality. I think that's what you know a lot of coaching is, you'll, if you came and watched ten session on a B licence you'd think you know pretty much very, very similar you know it's just a personality and how somebody delivers that session. So that's you know what I've tried to do. I think coaching is basically borrowing somebody's ideas or somebody's sessions and using your personality to deliver that.

*And when I've spoken to other participants, when they are pinching ideas of other people it hasn't all been coaches, they've actually gone outside of football or rugby and used other experiences in their lives, have you done that over the past year then drawn from any other experiences?*

No I've tried, one of the fitness coaches at (current Championship football club 1), he has connections with (current Super League Rugby Union club 1), we got invited down there so that's a possibility. One of my friends I actually invited him to (current Championship football club 1), he's the captain of (current County Championship Division One cricket club 1) and their experiences are totally different, the captain is like a manager so I wanted him to come in and sort of watch us work really, and see how we sort of do it compared to them. So yeah I think you know a great idea and one I would definitely look at and be interested in really seeing how different people work.

*But yet has it been the time constraints of your job and the demands?*

Yeah a little bit and family time constraints, if I started spending you know time doing that, that I don't really have at the minute but I would be intended in doing that definitely.

*And then reflecting over this past year, would you have done anything differently in your development?*

Not really no, no. You know probably like you said now I'd like one of the big things I'd like to do is probably go and spend time at another club as in you know not going to a (current League One football club 1) or a (current Championship football club 3) which will be very similar to (current Championship football club 1), I mean an Ajax or a you know a big club or a Liverpool you know and seeing how they run things you know. I think that would be interesting. In terms of the way I've coached, not really. I've enjoyed doing it by myself I've enjoyed the courses like I say, I'm looking forward to next year because I'm working with somebody you know every day which is good to bounce ideas off each other.

*Yeah, looking forward now, what do you want to achieve over this next year?*

My A licence is a priority really. I want to obviously get that under the belt and just take a little bit of time. I feel that last year was very, very rushed, I just wanted to you know get up and running really the coaching, you know I need a little bit of time to develop on my own and learn from some other coaches and like I said just get all of these experiences and you know I need a good couple of years to try and get my A licence anyway. So beyond that you know I've got no grand ambitions or



anything just trying to piece everything together really.

*I was just going to ask the question what are your overall ambitions for coaching, is it to remain within the academy setup or would you like to work up in the senior environment one day?*

Yeah I think you know one day I would like to work in the seniors but you know it's just getting the opportunity to be able to do that. You know I think my goals at the minute are focussed on the sort of A licence and you know just developing as a coach and learning from other people at the minute. You know I do, beyond that like I said ambition is to maybe work with senior players but you know if those opportunities come I don't know.

*And what would it mean, what does it mean to you get that A licence or what did it mean to you to get that B licence?*

Yeah I mean it's a sort of for me it's a big achievement, I never sort of set out you now as I was playing I never thought too much about the coaching and then fell into it at (current Championship football club 1), fell out of a job this summer where you know I could have maybe walked away from a club that you've played for them you know and playing for them until I had to retire through injury, you know told through a letter that you know you are not needed anymore, it's a bit gutting really and sort of its pushed me to really you know I've had to go out of my comfort zone, applied for a jobs and you know sort of rejected from jobs, seeing if there was a job there, I've had to really think and you know think do I really want to do this. You know I've been fortunate to get a job with (current Championship football club 2), you know I think it's something I really want I want to achieve as much as I can with it really.

*And the final question from me then is, if you had a conversation with a player who is just about to retire and go into coaching, what would your advice and recommendations be for that person?*

I'd say go for it. When I retired I was a bit unsure but the reward from this season and you know I've got into the coaching probably as much as you know I've come away from games, we've played games and this is at under sixteen level as well bearing in mind and I've been as down or as up as when I was actually playing. And the rewards of player development and seeing it on a Saturday the rewards are massive. That would be my recommendation for them to just go for it, you know there's nothing better than being a professional athlete, the second best thing you know is the coaching is fantastic and the rewards that go with it, and not financial at all but the rewards are fantastic you know that you get on the pitch. You know I've thoroughly enjoyed it anyway.

*Oh great, well yeah that's it that's all of the questions from me thank you ever so much, I've took up more of your time than I anticipated but thank you ever so much. It's been fascinating listening to you. Like I said at the start of the interview I'll transcribe this up and I'll send you a copy via email, you don't have to check over it but it's that opportunity for you to do so and if you want to make any amendments you can do so. But because you've left your role at (current Championship football club 1) I think I've got your old email address, can I just confirm your current one?*

Yeah, it's exactly the same so it's (email address).

*Right yeah I'll try and get that sent over to you in the next ten working days. But yeah thanks for the call back and thank you for participating in the study it's been really good.*

Alright cheers Alex.

*Alright, all the best for the forthcoming season.*

Cheers mate.

*Alright thanks again, bye-bye.*